

news

How countries on 'white list' have sought asylum



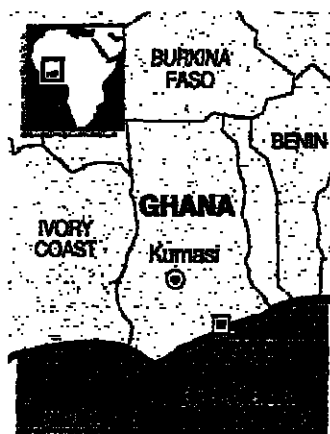
Number of asylum seekers applying to Britain in 1994 - 2350
Number of people granted asylum in 1994 - 10
General situation: Hundreds of Tamils, including prisoners of conscience, were held during 1994. Torture and ill-treatment of detainees common and resulted in at least one death. Ten others disappeared. Several thought to be executed without trial. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, fighting for an independent state also responsible for numerous human rights abuses including the execution of prisoners.
Foreign Office advice: fighting in North and East of the country. South and central area generally safe.



Number of asylum seekers applying to Britain in 1994 - 2,030
Number of people granted asylum in 1994 - 5
General situation: Thousands of political prisoners were held without trial during 1994. Torture and ill-treatment of detainees common. Scores of political detainees "disappeared" and hundreds reportedly executed without trial. The Government continues to face armed opposition in several states including Jammu, Kashmir, and the Punjab.
Foreign Office advice to travellers: generally calm. Volatile political situation in Kashmir.



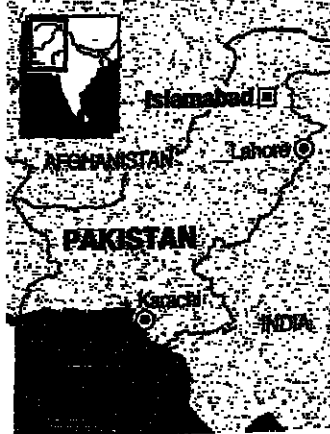
Number of asylum seekers applying to Britain in 1994 - 4,340
Number of people granted asylum in 1994 - 1 or 2
General situation: hundreds of pro-democracy activists in prison and at least 50 people were executed without trial by the security forces in 1994. The Ogoni tribe is heavily persecuted for campaigning against western oil companies and environmental degradation.
Foreign Office advice to travellers: uncertain and volatile political situation. Harassment by the army and police of travellers and locals prevalent. Armed hold-ups by the army common.



Number of asylum seekers applying to Britain in 1994 - 2,035
Number of people granted asylum in 1994 - 5
General situation: In February the Government imposed a state of emergency in some northern districts when inter-ethnic conflict resulted in 1,000 deaths. About 150,000 people fled the area. Ten possible prisoners of conscience, six associated with an alleged plot to overthrow the Government of President J. Rawlings.
Foreign Office advice to travellers: generally trouble free.



Number of asylum seekers applying to Britain in 1994 - 355
Number of people granted asylum in 1994 - 5
General situation: At least three prisoners of conscience held in 1994. Reports of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners and suspects by police. Tough new penal code introduced last year that further restricts the freedom of expression. The new penal code attempts to restrict the dissemination of false news and the defamation of the state.
Foreign Office advice: increasing petty street crime.



Number of asylum seekers applying to Britain in 1994 - 1810
Number of people granted asylum in 1994 - 5
General situation: Violent conflict between ethnic and religious groups and political parties resulted in at least 700 people were killed in Karachi alone. Dozens of possible prisoners of conscience held in 1994. Torture of prisoners common and resulted in at least 62 deaths.
Foreign Office advice: high level of political killings. Sporadic street violence and daily shootings in Karachi.



Number of asylum seekers applying to Britain in 1994 - zero
Number of people granted asylum in 1994 - zero
General situation: At least five conscientious objectors were imprisoned for refusing to perform military service in 1995. They were conditionally released after serving over half their sentences.
Foreign Office advice: increasing petty crime. Gang warfare also increasing.

Compiled by Danny Penman. Maps by Brian Green
* Home Office asylum whether there were one or two refugees from Nigeria granted asylum during 1994

Curbs on asylum-seekers 'already too tight'

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Only 1,100 people were given asylum in this country during the past year - less than 5 per cent of 25,000 who had applied.

Refugee and human rights groups say that those figures alone are more than enough evidence to prove that asylum procedures are already so tight that there is a real risk that genuine refugees could be sent back to persecution, torture or even death.

The latest proposals, they claim, will effectively wipe out asylum in this country.

While applications for asylum were up by 12,200 for the year ending in June, to 37,900, compared to Germany, for example, the UK does not have a huge immigration and asylum problem. Of more than 300,000 people seeking asylum in Eu-

rope in 1984, about one-tenth applied in the UK, compared with nearly 25 per cent in Germany and about 15 per cent in the Netherlands.

The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 - the last piece of anti-immigration legislation, which the Conservative Party believes paid a key part in

its success at the 1992 general election - has dramatically cut the number of refugees being allowed to stay in the UK.

In 1992 it was 20,000. It dropped to fewer than 5,000 in 1994 and the latest figures available for the year ending in June this year totalled 5,800. This included 4,700, nearly 20

per cent, who were not recognised as refugees but granted a kind of halfway house - exceptional leave to stay. This enables them to stay but without the benefits allowed refugees such as their families being allowed to join them. That leaves a total of 19,300 who had their applications turned down - a

sharp increase on the 11,800 in the previous 12 months.

Nevertheless, the Government is set to clamp down further in new legislation by alleging that bogus refugees and illegal immigrants are claiming millions of pounds in benefit and clogging up the system for those genuinely flee-

ing persecution. The difficulty is that the Home Office has never actually investigated the scale of the problem, claiming it is too complex and costly to find out exactly how many people are living here illegally and how of those are claiming benefit.

There are anecdotes of some illegal immigrants signing on in

different names and claiming benefits and housing and free services. But equally there is anecdotal evidence that employers in unsocial-hours, low-pay industries such as cleaning and catering are becoming dependent on illegal workers - the only ones who are prepared to take on long hours and poor

pay with no employment rights. Estimates put the figure at anything between 20,000 and up to 1 million from the anti-immigration right. The only thing known for sure is that between 4,000 and 6,000 illegal immigrants are deported every year - last year the figure was 5,032.

As well as the suggestion that the Government is playing a populist "race card", there is increasing pressure for more internal checks on immigrants and asylum seekers as our European partners demand that we drop our external passport controls for travellers within the EU. Despite a split in the Cabinet over plans to penalise employers of illegal immigrants, the whole anti-immigration package has more ministerial support than that for a national identity scheme.

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Tales of fear, torture and death behind applications for refuge

CASE STUDIES

Commissioner in Colombo, he managed to obtain a visa, and fled to the UK, where he applied for asylum.

Nandakumar (not his real name) had been working as a human rights lawyer. He had defended many who had been detained under Sri Lanka's emergency legislation and he

had been assisting families to search for relatives who had gone missing - believed abducted by army death squads.

In 1991 he was conducting a case against the security forces over the killing of two Sri Lankans, when three witnesses were themselves abducted, killed and their bodies dumped. He went into hiding, arrived in the UK in 1991 and was granted

asylum the following year.

Yesterday another refugee from Sri Lanka, who has been given asylum and who did not want to be identified, said: "You only have to read the news to see that Sri Lanka is not safe. There is a curfew in Colombo and there is complete censorship. You do not have curfews and censorship in countries that are safe."

Mr B was arrested at his home in Nigeria and taken for questioning by the military police. He claims he was punched, kicked and whipped. Electric prods were applied to his genitals. For days on end he was starved. His crime had been to question the military government. But he was smuggled out of the country and into the UK. Doctors from the Medical

Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, who examined him this summer, have no doubt that the scars to his body bear testimony to the abuse he claims to have suffered. The man, in his late twenties, is still suffering panic attacks and nightmares. He remains fearful for his family and colleagues. No decision has yet been made on his claim for asylum.

Rosemary West: Quest for truth
Police 'bugged safe house for two months'

WILL BENNETT

Police bugged a safe house where Rosemary West stayed before she was charged with murder but she said nothing that incriminated herself, Winchester Crown Court was told yesterday.

An electronic listening device was installed at the house provided by the police for a two-month period after she was released following initial questioning and before she was charged.

Andrew Chubb, for the prosecution, told the court that Mrs West had not said anything that indicated her involvement in the 10 murders with which she is charged or that she knew the bodies were buried at the West family home in Gloucester.

Richard Ferguson QC, for the defence, questioned Detective Superintendent John Bennett, the officer who led the murder investigation, about the bugging device. He said: "The purpose of the operation was to try to obtain further evidence."

Det Supt Bennett replied: "No, sir. It was for the purpose of seeking intelligence to gain the truth."

Mrs West, 41, denies murdering 10 girls and young women whose remains were found at the Wests' house at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, and at their previous home in the city, Fredrick West, her husband, who was charged with 12 murders, was found dead in his prison cell on 1 January this year.

The jury heard yesterday that Mr West had been questioned about the disappearance of Mary Bastholm, 15,

who was last seen in Gloucester in January 1968. Det Supt Bennett said there was no evidence that Mr West had been involved.

Earlier a slide projector was erected in the court as Dr David Whitaker, a forensic dentist, explained why he believed Charmaine West, the daughter of Mr West's first wife Rena by another man, had died soon after a photograph of her was taken on 29 April 1971.

The smiling face of Charmaine, eight, whose remains were found at the Wests' former home at 25 Midland Road, Gloucester, dominated the court room. Mrs West, who is charged with murdering her, watched as Dr Whitaker superimposed a photograph of the girl's skull onto the first picture.

He said that the photograph of Charmaine was particularly useful to him because she was smiling and showing her teeth. The only difference between the photo and the skull was that two baby teeth were missing.

Dr Whitaker said he believed the teeth had been lost after her death and that she had died no more than two to three months after the photograph was taken.

Last week Anne Marie Davis, Charmaine's half-sister, told the court that on the day Mrs West told her Charmaine had gone away with her mother Mr West was still in prison. Prison records show that he was released on 24 June 1971.

The prosecution completed its case yesterday after 14 days of evidence and the trial was adjourned until Monday, when the defence will begin.



Batchelor knight: Cliff Richard's fans celebrate outside Buckingham Palace where the singer yesterday received his knighthood. Photograph: Edward Webb

Mellor warns of windfall tax on Lottery profits

A warning that the Chancellor could be contemplating a windfall profits tax on the National Lottery organisers was given yesterday by David Mellor, the former Secretary of State for National Heritage, writes Colin Brown.

Mr Mellor told Kenneth Clarke that he would score a "spectacular own goal" if he

made any attempt in his forthcoming Budget to increase the tax on the profits of Camelot, which are reputed to be £1m a week. He revealed in a Commons debate on the lottery that the Treasury had wanted the 12 per cent lottery tax to be higher. It was raising £500m a year, plus corporation tax, but Mr Mellor said senior Treasury

figures still felt bruised by their defeat. "It is a nice little earner for our Ken," said Mr Mellor. "Anyone with the temptation to get a higher tax take in the coming Budget must think again. In the history of spectacular own goals, it would need a chapter all of its own."

Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage,

will announce on Monday new awards from lottery funds to young people who are promising in sport, the arts, and science. The millennium bursaries echoed a proposal by Labour for some of the money to be channelled into a "talent fund".

She strongly defended the National Lottery against the criticism of the Church and

ruled out imposing a cap on the big jackpot pay-outs.

Jack Cunningham, Labour's national heritage spokesman, attacked the "excessive" profits being made by Camelot. Mr Cunningham also made it clear that a Labour government would cut their profits on coming into office.

Inside Parliament, page 8

IN BRIEF

Railtrack forced to print new timetable

The fiasco over the error-ridden national timetable has forced Railtrack to publish an entirely new edition, for the first time ever, at a cost of more than £100,000. Railtrack, which took over publication this year, will also consolidate the existing two amendments and new information and publish one joint supplement in November. The new January timetable edition will be issued instead of the usual new year supplement.

Mother killed child

A mother was yesterday convicted at Nottingham Crown Court of killing her four-year-old daughter by poisoning her in September 1986. The jury retired for the night after failing to reach a verdict on a charge against Celia Beckett, 34, of Newark, of poisoning another daughter, Debbie, now six.

Coach crash charge

Stephen Brown, the driver of a coach in which 13 pensioners died when it crashed on the M4 last May, faces a charge of causing death by dangerous driving, an inquest in Bristol was told. The hearing was adjourned.

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We were going to call it Pope's Toenail
but that would have been just silly.



THE SERIOUS BEER WITH THE SILLY NAME.

طوبى من لا حول

Leukaemia girl: Family allowed to sell story to pay for treatment after judge overturns restrictions on naming of Child B

The 11-year-old winning her fight for life

REBECCA FOWLER

The courageous battle of Jaymee Bowen, the 11-year-old girl known as Child B, who was denied treatment for leukaemia by her local health authority, unfolded for the first time yesterday as her father attempted to raise further money for her treatment.

David Bowen won permission to reveal his daughter's identity and her struggle against the illness from three Court of Appeal judges. They reluctantly lifted a court order banning the media from naming her earlier this year so she could sell her story to the press.

When it was revealed that Jaymee had been refused further treatment for a fatal form of leukaemia in March, she became known to the world as Child B. Her case prompted outrage over how the medical profession decided when to stop treating patients.

Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, who presided over the case yesterday, said: "I greatly regret the necessity to exploit the medical problems of this child for purposes of financial gain."

However, he recognised that a £23,000 deal with the Daily Mirror could prove vital to Jaymee, who is currently in remission. "I don't think the maintenance of reporting restrictions can be justified if the consequence were the denial of treatment which might be therapeutic and life-saving," he said.

Jaymee was refused further treatment for her illness earlier this year by Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Authority. The Bowens were told the £75,000 cost would not be justified, as her chances of survival were so slim.

The decision followed a five-year struggle by Jaymee to overcome the illness. She was first diagnosed as suffering from cancer in 1990. After an intensive course of chemotherapy at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, she was thought to be clear of the disease.

But in December 1993 Jaymee was found to have acute myeloid leukaemia. The following year Charlotte, her sister, acted as a donor in a life-saving bone marrow transplant at the Royal Marsden Hospital, west London.



Lust for life: Jaymee Bowen, Child B, undergoing treatment. She was refused an NHS bed in March because she had only a 2.5 per cent of survival

As a celebratory Christmas trip Jaymee travelled to Disneyland in the United States with her father and sister in 1994. However, the Bowens were devastated at the beginning of this year when a routine blood test showed that the leukaemia had returned.

Jaymee prepared to resume her tenacious fight against the disease, but Cambridge Health Authority refused to provide further treatment, and a

second bone marrow transplant. Doctors justified their decision by saying that she had only a 2.5 per cent chance of survival.

When Jaymee appealed a High Court judge ruled that the authority's decision "assaulted her fundamental right to life", and she should be treated. But the authority appealed against the decision, and on the same day the Court of Appeal

The outcry surrounding the plight of Child B, as she was named, prompted an anonymous donor to give Jaymee £75,000 towards her treatment, and she was admitted to the private Portland Hospital in London in March.

Dr Peter Gravett, the consultant in charge of her treatment, declared Jaymee clear of leukaemia in the summer, although he warned the remission was likely to be short-lived,

and she still had only a 10 per cent chance of complete recovery.

But in August Jaymee celebrated her 11th birthday, lifting her survival chances to between 20 per cent and 30 per cent. Her fight had proved so successful, the National Health Service agreed to fund part of her care again.

Mr Bowen, who is determined to raise the rest of the money needed from interviews

and donors, praised his daughter's spirit.

"If there was ever a child who scored well on what she's gone through and what she's done, her response to drugs, and her zest and appetite for life, this is the child," he said.

The NHS decision to suspend funding of her treatment earlier this year was widely condemned. Sir Morris, Labour MP for Wythenshawe, accused officials of "folly" and

"inhumanity" in trying to play God.

"This child's story is the sharpest possible condemnation of allowing money to decide who lives and who dies," he said. "She was left waiting to die by official decision. But for her father's determination to fight for her life, she would now be dead."

The decision not to treat Jaymee was defended yesterday by Stephen Thornton, chief ex-

ecutive of the Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Authority.

"We took a great deal of medical advice on this particular case," he said. "All of the doctors concerned with her treatment were in agreement and in that sense all supported the decision we took... People who live in our area need not fear. They will get the treatment that they need for any particular condition they have."

Jaymee's battle

September 1990: Jaymee, aged six, is diagnosed as having a form of lymph gland cancer known as Hodgkin's disease.
August 1992: After intensive chemotherapy at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, the disease is pronounced cleared.
December 1993: Acute myeloid leukaemia diagnosed.
March 1994: Jaymee has bone marrow transplant, with sister Charlotte as donor.
January 1995: Routine blood test shows leukaemia has developed again. Doctors give her six to eight weeks to live.
27 February 1995: Cambridge Health Authority refuses further treatment, saying it is unfair to Jaymee when she has only 2.5 per cent chance of recovery.
20 March 1995: High Court judge rules that health authority refusal to pay for further treatment "assaulted her fundamental right to life". Authority appeals and Court of Appeal overturns decision.
13 March 1995: Jaymee is admitted to a private hospital after an anonymous donor provides £75,000 for treatment.
14 May 1995: Jaymee pronounced clear of disease but specialist says remission is likely to be short term.
August 1995: Still in remission, survival prospects said to be up from 10 per cent to 20-30 per cent.
24 September 1995: It is announced that part of Jaymee's care is now being funded by the NHS.

Police forces accused of poor violent crime detection rates

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Four police forces were warned yesterday about their poor performance in dealing with violent crimes, by the Government's independent inspector of constabulary.

The forces considered least effective in dealing with all forms of violent crime were Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, West Midlands and Greater Manchester.

The annual report of the Chief Inspector of Constabulary also suggested that some forces in England and Wales had very low standards for the time taken to answering 999 calls. There was also a wide difference in the level of public satisfaction with foot and mobile patrols, which varied from about 30 per cent to nearly two thirds.

This was the first time the Chief Inspector of Constabulary, which assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of all 43 forces in England and Wales, has published performance indicators. The report, which

Tackling violent crime



covers the 15 months ending in March 1995, stressed however the difficulty in comparing forces because of the statistical analysis used and the huge differences between the forces.

All four police forces pinpointed by the performance indicators have high levels of reported crime but low levels of detection. Merseyside came in at the bottom, with about 110 violent crimes detected for every 100 officers, compared to the average of 181.

Trefor Morris, Chief Inspector of Constabulary, said of the four forces: "They need to look very carefully at their performance." Dyfed-Powys in

Wales came top in the study, followed by Wiltshire, Suffolk and Gwent were joint third and North Wales was fifth.

The Inspectorate of Constabulary stressed that this was a crude method of assessing how effective a force is in dealing with violent crime. Other factors involved include the make up of the force's area - whether it is rural or urban - and what types of violent crime are more common.

Mr Morris defended the use of performance indicators, saying that they provided a powerful incentive for forces to improve their efficiency, and made chief constables more accountable. His report said that nationally the detection rate for violent crime was high, at 76 per cent, but that individual forces' rates varied between 48 per cent to nearly 100 per cent.

In criticising the target times set by some police forces to answer 999 calls, Mr Morris said: "There are some that seem far too lax and easy to reach." The South Yorkshire force plans to respond in 30 seconds - a tar-

get it meets in about 87 per cent of cases. This compares with the Gwent force which meets its response target of six seconds in almost every case. South Yorkshire's neighbouring force, West Yorkshire, has a benchmark of five seconds. Setting universal targets for indicators such as 999 calls is one idea among several currently being considered by chief constables.

The report also reveals that despite repeated Government claims that the number of police officers has increased, it has in fact declined. In March 1995 there were 127,222 officers compared to a high of 128,045 in 1992. The Home Office argues that the numbers of civilians attached to the force has increased to about 50,000 which frees officers for other duties.

Mr Morris said that the gap between public demand and police resources was continuing to grow, and that while resources had risen by 8 per cent, the number of 999 calls that needed police action had gone up by 15 per cent to six million a year.

BT faces writ over hackers

CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Correspondent

The London branch of the advertising agency J. Walter Thompson is considering suing British Telecom, after phone hackers exploited flaws in a switchboard sold by BT to make £60,000 worth of free calls in four days.

Managers at the agency also say they may club together in any lawsuit against BT with other companies whose switchboards have been broken into by hackers.

"BT failed to support us to the level that they should. They didn't provide the means or the training to protect us against this fraud," said Alison Sanderson, commercial director at JWT's London office. Janet McMillan, the company's technical director, added: "The features that the hackers used to

get through our system are the same ones that BT put forward as a selling point."

Earlier this month, the *Independent* revealed that phone hackers have for years used well-known flaws in the voicemail systems of the Meridian switchboard to make calls lasting hours, directed all over the world. They dial into the company after hours, often on freephone lines, and reprogramme unanswered extensions remotely to dial external numbers. The calls are thus charged to the switchboard's owner.

BT has sold more than 5,000 Meridian systems in the UK since 1991, but only began to realise the extent of the hackers' activities late last year. In January an internal BT memo told staff "not to discuss the various means by which fraud can be made - this will only serve to alarm the customer further."

Ms McMillan discovered in May that criminal hackers based in New York were dialling through JWT's Meridian switchboard to make calls. They reprogrammed extensions to dial numbers in China, Yemen and Syria.

JWT was an essential link in the hackers' chain because they were making the calls using telephone card numbers stolen from the phone company AT&T. These do not allow direct calls to developing countries. "They needed to dial through another exchange to get out, and we were the intermediate," said Ms McMillan. "The calls lasted hours. It's big business, a multi-million pound fraud, not some teenager in an anorak sitting in his bedroom."

Ms McMillan disabled the facilities which made the hacking possible. But she said that reduces the usefulness of the

switchboard: "It's just like a big, expensive answering machine."

Anecdotal evidence suggests that phone hacking is growing rapidly in Britain, and probably costs British businesses millions of pounds annually. At least three British-based companies have lodged complaints with the telecommunications regulator, Ofcom, about their treatment by BT.

The *Independent* has also learnt of a number of other victims of such hacking, including a school and a hospital, which hackers used to make £40,000 of fraudulent calls in one week.

In January, BT sent a four-page security warning specifically to Meridian owners, which it said "covers the main vulnerable areas and how to guard against hackers". But Ms McMillan said: "It was next to useless - it told you to restrict access, but not how."

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news

Industrial epidemic: The growing pressure on office staff is damaging performance at work as well as their family life, says report

Long hours culture hitting productivity

JOJO MOYES

Britain is facing a new industrial epidemic. Office staff are working longer hours, but productivity is falling.

Family life is also under threat from increased stress at work, with women coming off worse. Nearly three times as many women as men in white collar work are divorced or separated.

In a new report, *The Family Friendly Workplace*, Britain's increasing "long hours culture" is also shown to be seriously affecting employees' health and their standard of work.

The survey of more than 1,350 white-collar employees, published by recruitment and communications organisation Austin Knight, indicates that long hours are becoming the norm for British workers. Two-thirds worked 40 hours or more per week and a quarter worked 50 hours or more.

Men work longer hours than women, with 81 per cent of men saying they worked 40 hours or more compared with 56 per cent of women. More than a third (37 per cent) of men worked 50 hours or more compared with 15 per cent of women.

More than half of all white-collar workers felt that "long hours culture" was a firm feature of their workplace, while

many said they felt under pressure from bosses to work longer hours than contracted.

According to Anne Riley, UK chief executive of Austin Knight, the findings give the lie to the idea of the "leisure generation", a new breed of workers who would "telework" from home using laptop computers and spend increasing time with their families.

Ms Riley said: "People are working in leaner organisations and the recession has made employers and employees quite nervous. There is a lot more job insecurity and workers need to be seen to be doing whatever hours are necessary."

Staff face 'climate of fear'

Many big British companies have created a "climate of fear" for employees with high rewards in the boardroom and dispensability for the rest, according to a leading specialist in organisational structure, writes Barrie Clement.

Addressing the annual conference of the Institute of Personnel Development yesterday, Professor Amin Rajan said in 1993, big companies were talking about moving away from paternalism and bureaucracy towards democratic structures with a slimmed-down hierarchy

Far from sitting back and driving their employees ever harder, those in management worked the longest hours of all. Among senior staff, 45 per cent of men worked 50 hours or more.

Instead of resulting in better productivity, the "epidemic" is costing British industry millions as employees are physically affected and take sick leave.

More than three quarters (76 per cent) said that continually working long hours affected them physically. Latest figures from the Confederation of British Industry show that, on average, almost eight working days per worker were lost due to sick leave in 1994. Public sector workers lose almost 10 days a year on average, compared to almost seven days in manufacturing.

It is not just employees' health that suffers. More than half of all white-collar workers said their personal life was damaged as a result of working long hours.

Women felt their partners were less likely to understand the need for them to stay late. They were also more inclined to believe that it was impossible to combine both a successful career and family life.

More men than women considered that their work performance suffered as their hours grew longer. Half of all men, compared with 42 per cent of women took this view.

Surprisingly, employers also believe performance is hit by long hours. Around 90 per cent described the "long hours culture" as a problem, because of reduced performance and lowered morale.

"I think that's one of the most encouraging things to come out of the survey," said Ms Riley.

"They're not just being altruistic about the whole thing. Employers should have more flexible policies to enable employees to work at their best. It doesn't mean that they will be working less hard."

Neither Mark Wasilewski, 35, nor his wife, Ghislaine Daubeney, 32, consider themselves workaholics. They just love their jobs. Between them they work an average of 100 hours a week and earn a six-figure salary. Lunch breaks don't

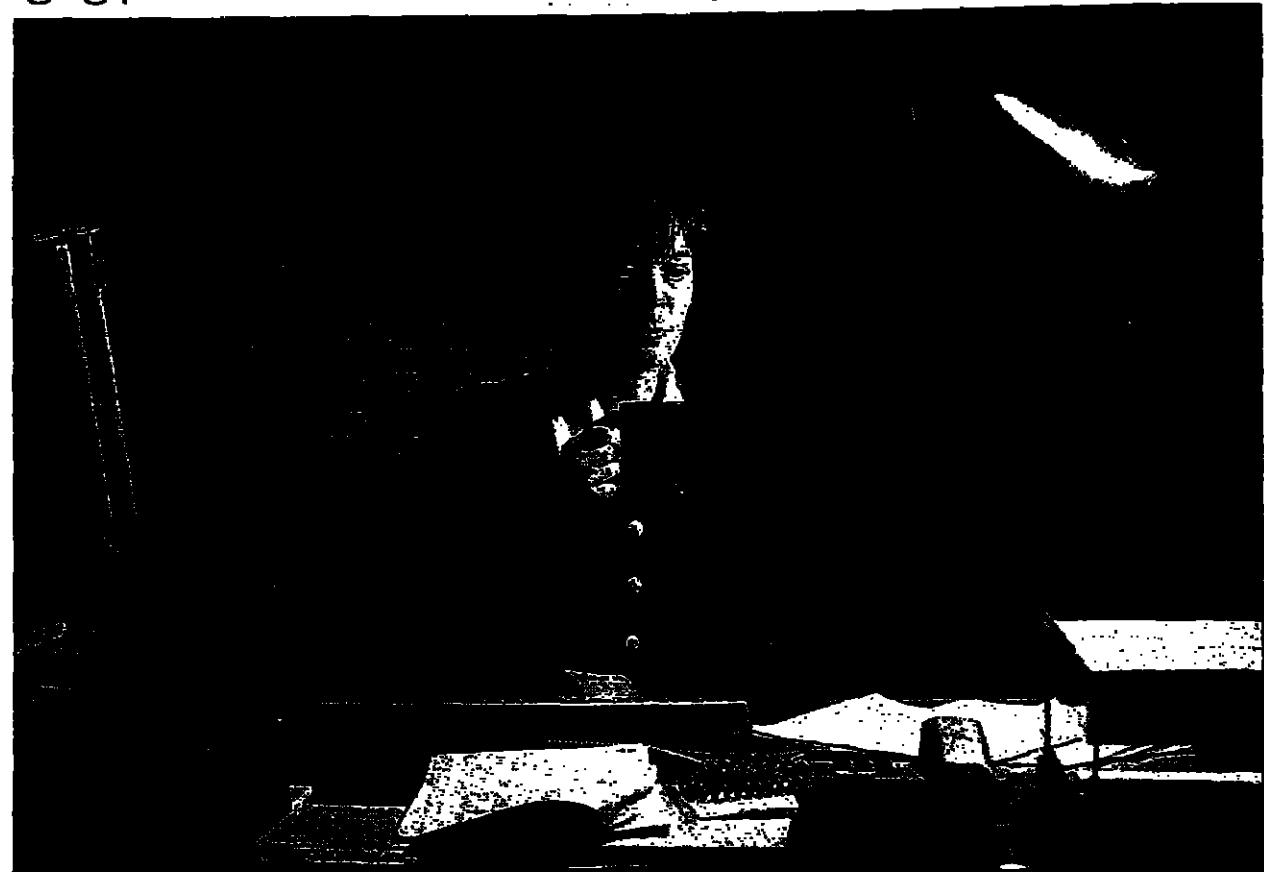
figure but working dinners do. When a seven-month-old baby is added to the equation, the couple insists it all adds up - just.

"It's a fine balancing act at the end of the day. It's about being able to juggle all the balls and not let any of them fall on the ground," said Ms Daubeney, a research analyst who returned to work in August after taking maternity leave.

"Officially I didn't have to come back till the middle of October, but I came back early. I missed the mental challenge and the timing felt right," she said. Ms Daubeney hands her daughter, Gabriella, over to the nanny when she leaves home in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, at 7.30am and whisks herself away from the West End in time to relieve her at 6.30pm. Between those hours, Ms Daubeney works as part of a team of seven for a world-leading US investment consultancy which advises on assets of more than US\$500m.

"One of the hardest problems is guilt. For example, in the past I used to leave the office between 6.30pm and 7.00pm. Now I feel incredibly guilty leaving at 5.30pm to get back for the nanny. There's no guilt placed upon me at work but I think it's an issue a lot of women feel."

Even though Ms Daubeney endeavours to check out at 5.30pm, her time sheet makes exhausting reading. When she is travelling - once a month to Frankfurt, Brussels, Paris or Edinburgh - she tops up 40 hours' work in just four days. In a normal five-day week she



Fighting guilt: Ghislaine Daubeney struggles to leave her work behind at the office

Photograph: Edward Webb

Two incomes, one child, no time

CLARE GARNER

Neither Mark Wasilewski, 35, nor his wife, Ghislaine Daubeney, 32, consider themselves workaholics. They just love their jobs. Between them they work an average of 100 hours a week and earn a six-figure salary. Lunch breaks don't

figure but working dinners do. When a seven-month-old baby is added to the equation, the couple insists it all adds up - just.

"It's a fine balancing act at the end of the day. It's about being able to juggle all the balls and not let any of them fall on the ground," said Ms Daubeney, a research analyst who returned to work in August after taking maternity leave.

"Officially I didn't have to come back till the middle of October, but I came back early. I missed the mental challenge and the timing felt right," she said. Ms Daubeney hands her daughter, Gabriella, over to the nanny when she leaves home in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, at 7.30am and whisks herself away from the West End in time to relieve her at 6.30pm. Between those hours, Ms Daubeney works as part of a team of seven for a world-leading US investment consultancy which advises on assets of more than US\$500m.

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Even though Ms Daubeney endeavours to check out at 5.30pm, her time sheet makes exhausting reading. When she is travelling - once a month to Frankfurt, Brussels, Paris or Edinburgh - she tops up 40 hours' work in just four days. In a normal five-day week she

works up to 45 hours, not including the five hours she spends working on the train, to and from the office.

"It would be wrong to say I don't take work home. I always hope to pinch a quiet hour here and there to lock myself away to work quietly. You don't switch off. You'd like to but you probably don't. It's a job where you could work 24 hours a day seven days a week."

Mr Wasilewski joined his present company, a fund management company, in April 1994, to be responsible for a 21-strong UK Equity team. On average he works about 60 hours a week, generally between 8am and 8pm, but sometimes longer.

"When the dinners and client meetings in the evenings kick in I don't get home until 10.30pm or 11pm. I've just had three days in two successive weeks of that. It works out at 42 hours in three days," said Mr Wasilewski. "If there is a special project on, the hours are just silly. I can work 14 hours a day, seven days a week for the best part of six weeks."

"When I came I knew it was going to be quite an intense period of work because the job was a rebuilding exercise. I do consider them long hours but I also consider them temporary."

Since Gabriella arrived, Mr Wasilewski has tried to get home earlier. He is hoping to establish a week of between 50 and 55 hours as the norm. "Gabriella doesn't go to bed early so I get to see her in the evenings. Sometimes if I've had a hard day I'm exhausted but Gabriella is a joy of a baby, a form of relaxation and such a change from work."

A day in the life

6.30am Ghislaine Daubeney wakes up and checks her e-mail. She has a message from her husband, Mark, saying he's on his way to work. She gets up and starts her morning routine.

7.30am She leaves home for work. She has a quick breakfast and gets into the car. She starts her commute to work.

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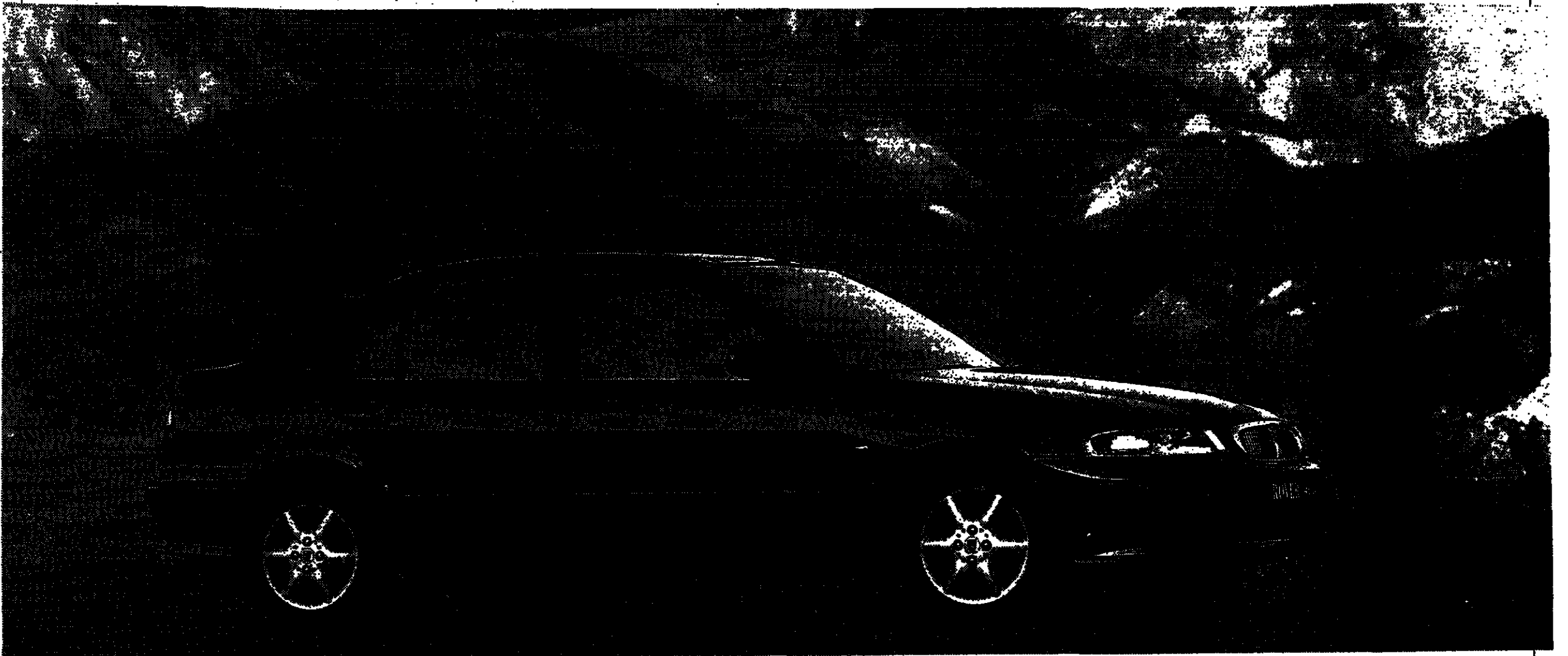
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*PLUS DEPOSIT AND FINAL PAYMENT.

THE NEW ROVER 400. THE BEST LONG-DISTANCE RIDE ON EARTH FROM ONLY £139* A MONTH.

Far fetched?

Not according to those impartial people at Autocar magazine.

They went so far as to say; 'drain covers and potholes have rarely been so inconsequential in this class, nor motorways so flat-iron smooth.'

Our engineers however, could have gone further.

Explaining at length the advantages of double wishbone suspension, one-to-one straight line damping and their unique solution to the problem of engine vibration.

But you don't need a degree in engineering to appreciate the new Rover 400, just a degree of imagination.

Picture a road without bumps or ruts.

And instead of the roar of tyres on tarmac there's little more than a subdued hum to disturb your thoughts as you glide along.

You've just been driving the new Rover 400.

Relaxing wasn't it?

Now picture yourself driving one all the time.

From just £139* a month, it shouldn't be too difficult.

But don't think too long, this opportunity ends on December 10th.

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CASH PRICE*	£12,320.25
DEPOSIT (35%)	£4,273.60
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AN ADMINISTRATION FEE OF £67 AND A SALES AGENCY FEE OF £125 ARE ADDED TO THE FIRST PAYMENT. **NOTED THAT THE VEHICLE HAS NOT EXCEEDED THE AGREED RESIDUE OF 12,000 MILES PER ANNUAL MILEAGE AND IS IN GOOD CONDITION. THE OFFER IS NOT AVAILABLE ON EC PURCHASE PLAN PURCHASES.

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news

New chapter looms for feminist publisher



Founding mother: Carmen Callil, who was instrumental in the launch Photograph: Rex Features

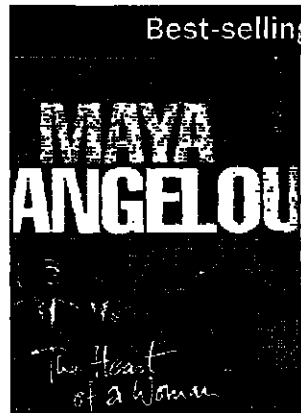
RHYS WILLIAMS
Media Correspondent

The future of Virago, the publishing house founded 22 years ago by women for women, looked in doubt yesterday as speculation grew that it may be sold to a mainstream competitor.

Publishing heavyweights such as Random House and Bloomsbury are rumoured to be circling, although Lennie Goodings, Virago's publishing director, refused to comment on any possible sale. Ms Goodings also declined to discuss reports that she resigned last week.

At the root of the problem is the suggestion that Virago is struggling to compete in the prolonged book-trade recession. There are also understood to be internal disputes over the decision by the publishing house, for so long a champion of feminism, to publish male authors. A senior Virago source yesterday confirmed that the current uncertainty would be resolved within two to three weeks, although she refused to provide details.

Virago was launched on a



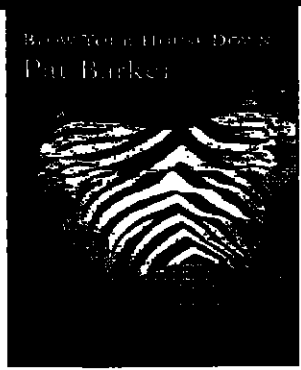
Maya Angelou: She is perhaps the best known of Virago's more recent discoveries. She has been spoken of as America's unofficial Poet Laureate, and was invited by President Bill Clinton to speak at his inauguration. Virago first published her autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, in 1984.

wave of feminist fervour by Carmen Callil, Rosie Boycott and Ursula Owen in June 1973. Their mission was to help women gain their place at the heart of British literature – in

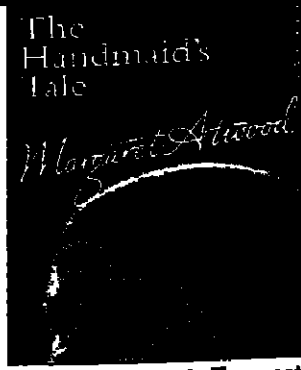
Best-selling authors who were 'discovered' by the publishing house



Edith Wharton: She was 're-discovered' by Virago. The renaissance of interest in her work has seen an Oscar-winning film adaptation of her book, *The Age of Innocence*, first published in 1920. Also adapted, and listed among 15 Wharton novels published by Virago where her earliest work won critical acclaim, most notably *Union Road*.



Pat Barker: She won the Guardian Fiction Prize in 1993 with *The Eye in the Door*, and this year *The Ghost Road* is Booker Prize-shortlisted. Although she has since moved to Penguin, she began her career at Virago where her earliest work won critical acclaim, most notably *Union Road*.



Margaret Atwood: The poet and novelist began her career at Virago in 1979 and has been one of the publishing house's best-sellers ever since. Her books include *Life Before Man*, *Bluebeard's Egg* and *Other Stories*, *Wilderness Tips*, and *Murder in the Dark*.

Compiled by Ben Summers

both writing and publishing. Every early Virago book carried a statement of intent on its frontispiece: "Virago is a feminist publishing house."

There then followed a list of the Virago advisory group, which included Germaine Greer and the Spare Rib Collective, and a call to arms by Sheila Rowbotham which read: "It is only when women start to organise in large numbers that we become a political force, and move towards the possibility of a truly democratic society."

As well as promoting the careers of writers such as current Booker Prize nominee Pat Barker, Maya Angelou and

Margaret Atwood, the company is also credited with reviving the reputations of the likes of Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Rosamund Lehmann and Vita Sackville-West.

While Atwood and Angelou have chosen to stay with the publisher that discovered and nurtured them, Virago has had problems in holding on to a large stable of contemporary writers. Many have elected to leave for larger, wealthier houses – Angela Carter to Chatto and Windus, and Shena Mackay to Heinemann, for example. The grim reality of the publishing recession has also eaten into the early idealism. Booksellers

halved orders from Virago's backlist of 700 titles, and last year the company sacked long serving editors, cut new titles from 80 to 70, and reorganised. Nina Bayden, who has 12 titles published by Virago, said yesterday: "It would be sad if it was sold, because it's one of the few small, independent publishers that has succeeded in establishing a clear brand image."

Pay Weldon took a different view. "The need now for a separate women's publisher has gone. I think it's a sign of their achievement that we can now look at all literature, rather than at male literature and female separately."

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JOHN WILLCOCK
Financial Correspondent

Kevin Maxwell agreed with a bank's description of his father as "unpredictable and inconsistent", but told the Old Bailey that Robert Maxwell could also be capable of acts of spontaneous generosity.

In answer to his counsel, Alun Jones QC, Kevin Maxwell agreed with Lloyds Bank's assessment of his father. This was why the bank, in an internal memo, said it wanted to reduce its exposure to the group. Kevin told the jury his father was "capable of very substantial changes of direction and strategy without warning".

Kevin, in his eighth day in the witness box during the marathon Maxwell trial, said as an example that by the Eighties, his father had built up one of the largest printing empires in the world.

Suddenly he decided to switch directions and go into publishing, with the acquisition



tion of the Mirror Group. "One thing that remained constant with him was his interest in the media," said Kevin. "It remained a life-long interest."

Kevin, who had told how his father had bullied him into telling lies to a bank, yesterday said Robert Maxwell could also be a kindly employer.

Kevin described his "kind and spontaneous" action in taking the two young sons of Lloyds executive Johnny Armstrong up on to the roof of the Mirror headquarters to see his helicopter. In a condolence letter to the Maxwell brothers, Mr

Armstrong said it had given his boys a lifelong memory.

The court was also told that Robert Maxwell had sent champagne to an employee who had just obtained a professional qualification, as well as phoning to congratulate him.

Kevin spent most of yesterday's session describing crisis talks with Lloyds bank, one of the Maxwell group's main bankers, in the wake of his father's disappearance in November 1991. Within hours of his father's mysterious death, Kevin Maxwell feared banks would cause problems by "running to the hills" and demanding their money back.

Kevin Maxwell, his brother, Ian, and former Maxwell financial adviser, Larry Trachtenberg, deny conspiracy to defraud the pension fund by misusing £22m worth of shares. Kevin Maxwell alone denies a similar charge of conspiring with his father to misuse £100m worth of shares.

The trial continues today.

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Nursery vouchers: Little support for Government scheme as fears grow that the plan may undermine early-years' education

Tories rally against nursery vouchers

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

A group of leading Conservative councillors have joined forces to oppose the government's nursery voucher scheme. They have told the Education Secretary that the plan will lead to lower standards in nursery schools.

The use of vouchers will also penalise those councils which currently spend the most on nursery education, they said in a letter sent to Gillian Shephard earlier this month.

As speakers from all political parties addressed a rally at Westminster yesterday to protest against the vouchers, Conservative opposition to the plans appeared to be growing.

Under the scheme, parents of four-year-olds would apply for vouchers worth £1,100 which they would cash in for part-time education at a local authority

nursery school, a private school or a pre-school playgroup. The vouchers cover only about half the cost of a place at nursery school.

But with most local authorities now controlled by Labour or the Liberal Democrats, some Conservative councillors fear the scheme could be used as a powerful political weapon against them if it affects standards or leads to financial penalties against some councils.

The letter to Mrs Shephard was drafted at a meeting in September by Conservative education spokespeople from Solihull, Coventry, Kirklees, Warwickshire, Hereford and Worcester, Waltham Forest, Derbyshire and Dudley. The councillors say they are supported by their counterparts in other areas.

Under the voucher scheme, the letter says, the quality of education in nursery schools

could slip below the minimum acceptable standard. "We doubt [quality] will be provided or enforced with only a light-touch inspection," it says.

The protesters add that while nurseries attached to schools are rigorously inspected, checks on private schools and playgroups would be far fewer. The councillors say it is unfair that the councils which spend most on nursery education should be the hardest hit by the scheme, which will claw back money from local authorities and redistribute it as vouchers.

The unofficial lobbying group is led by Geoffrey Wright, Conservative education chairman in Solihull which, as a borough, stands to lose 90 per cent of the £3 million it currently receives in grants for early years' education. The letter says, "In our opinion it seems

to be the wrong way round. We should be helping those who have helped themselves."

Mrs Shephard has not yet replied to the letter, though at a meeting with authorities earlier this week she hinted that the details of the scheme could still be changed if necessary.

Yesterday's lobby of Parliament heard that shortages of teachers could also threaten the voucher scheme. Labour's education spokesman, David Blunkett, released figures showing that there had been an 18-per-cent reduction in trained early-years and primary-school teachers between 1992 and 1994 despite a rise in the number of younger pupils.

"These figures show the lies behind the Government's rhetoric," Mr Blunkett said. "Clearly no provision has been made for the expansion of nursery education through the voucher scheme."

Friends few and far between

Pity the poor nursery voucher. Even in the turbulent and fast-changing world of education there can have been few policies with so few friends.

The opposition parties are against it, the nursery education lobby is against it, many private nurseries are against it. Rumour has it that even the Secretary of State for Education is not keen. And now a growing number of local authority Tories are adding to the chorus of disapproval.

No sooner had the idea been promoted as a means of delivering John Major's pledge to work towards pre-school places for all than it began to attract powerful enemies.

Mrs Shephard objected to the scheme on the grounds that it would be unwieldy and bureaucratic. In April this year, she said vouchers were "not the preferred option", backing instead a system under which local authorities and private agencies would bid to provide places. But by July, support for vouchers from the Prime Minister and

Chancellor had forced her to back down. "Purchasing power in the hands of parents will stimulate a real market in the supply of places that parents want," she said as the plan for vouchers was announced.

The main problem with vouchers is that they are expensive because they subsidise parents who are already paying for private nursery provision. Most of the cost will be clawed back from local authorities which will then have to compete with the private providers to win it back again.

Not surprisingly, Conservative as well as Labour and Liberal Democrat authorities have objected, and only three - Westminster, Wandsworth, and Kensington and Chelsea - have signed up for a pilot project. Those authorities which currently spend most on nursery education have the most to lose.

But even some who stand to gain have reservations. A preliminary survey by the Independent Schools' Joint Committee on Assisted Places revealed that only one in three private-sector heads in favour.

Susan Hay, managing director of Nurseries Ltd, which owns and runs five London nurseries, has said that the financial risk involved in setting up new schools will deter all but the bravest entrepreneurs. She points out that the voucher does not contribute at all to building costs.

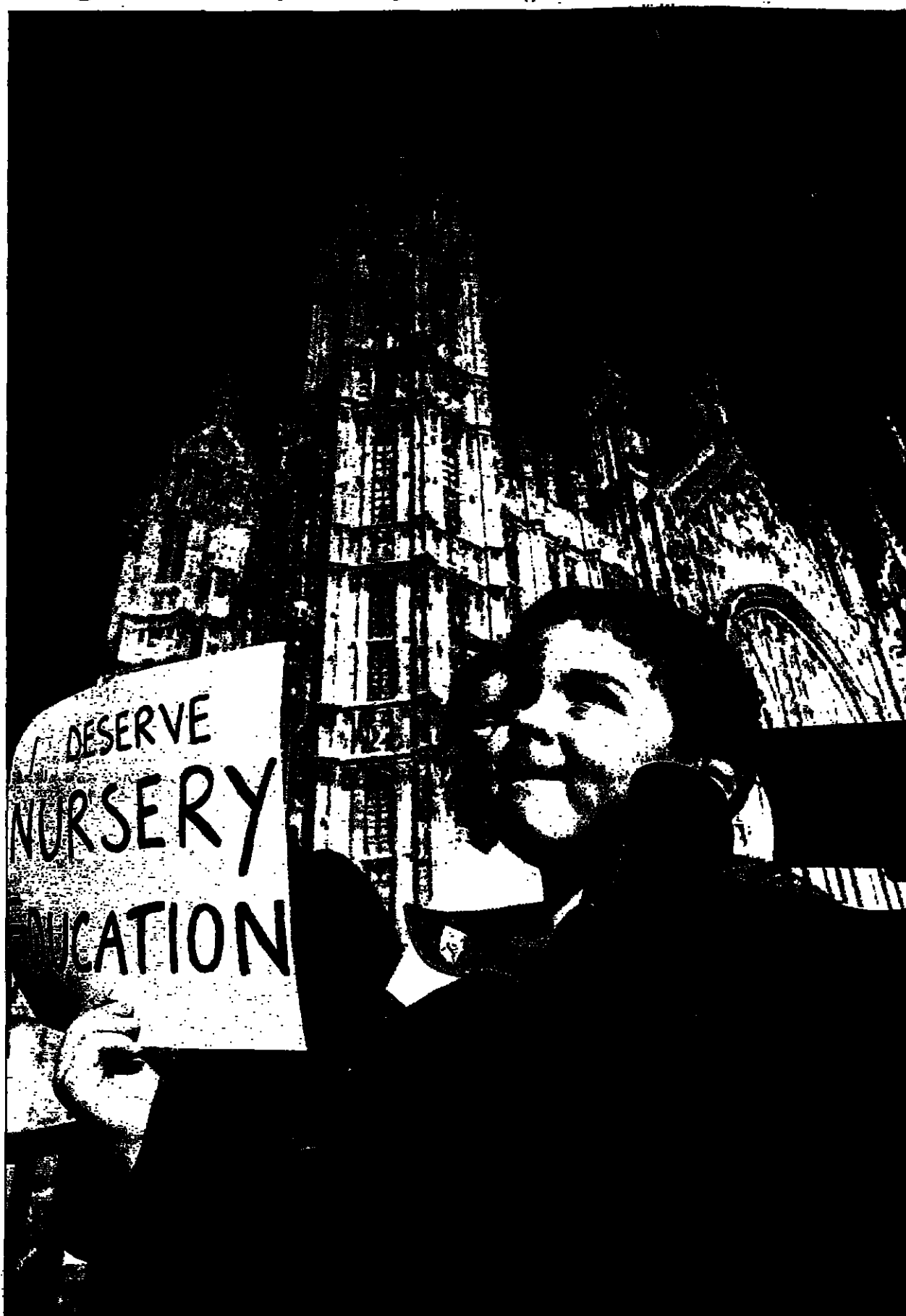
The playgroups, now renamed the Pre-School Learning Alliance, threatened to pull out of the scheme because they were told they could only redeem their vouchers for £550 each. When ministers backed down, adding an extra £100m to the total £700m cost, the alliance still had objections despite the welcome injection of cash that vouchers will bring to its members. Its administrator, Margaret Loebe, said it would

create unwelcome competition and would not provide for adequate teacher training.

The nursery lobby is also concerned about teacher training and says the quality of nursery schools could be affected if rigorous standards are not applied. Sir Christopher Ball, director of learning at the Royal Society of Arts, has objected because the scheme only caters for four-year-olds, making it likely that schools which currently offer places to three year-olds will cease to do so.

The scheme does, of course, have some powerful supporters - attracted by its competitive edge and the fact that it will take funds away from local authorities, only a handful of which are Tory-controlled - but two of its strongest advocates, John Redwood and Jonathan Aitken, can no longer offer their backing from the strength of positions within the Cabinet.

Fran Abrams



For the children: James Stirling, 4, states his case at the Westminster rally yesterday

Photograph: Brian Harris

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■ National Heritage Secretary rejects criticisms by the churches ■ Cunningham attacks Camelot's 'licence to print money'

Bottomley rules out change to lottery

Virginia Bottomley yesterday set herself against any of the changes to the Lottery mooted by the churches and others concerned at its effect on the national psyche and the £1m a week profits of its operators.

The National Lottery "truly is the Dream Machine", the

The National Lottery had changed the face of funding in the arts, sport and heritage, she insisted. More than £586m had already been awarded to 2,111 projects and over the next seven years the total contribution to good causes was expected to be over £9bn.

"It is the people's lottery. Millions play. Millions watch. Millions win. In years ahead a bonanza of billions will benefit the causes we value."

Ridiculing the notion that huge prizes had brought misery to the winners, Mrs Bottomley said that out of about 280 wins, only 18 had been for more than £5m and many jackpots were shared by syndicates of up to 20 people.

"How many of those 18 have been made miserable by the experience we do not know. We can guess that there are many more people willing to change places with them."

Rejecting Labour's call for the lottery to be run "not-for-profit" basis when Camelot's seven-year contract runs out, she quoted the Lottery regulator's observation that more would have been kept in costs by Richard Branson's "run it for free" foundation.

As for capping the jackpot at £1m, proposed by the church-



National pastime: The National Lottery 'truly is the Dream Machine', Virginia Bottomley told the Commons yesterday

Photograph: Tim Smith

es and the Liberal Democrats conference, Mrs Bottomley said that in the weeks when the jackpot had rolled-over, sales had increased by 10-20 per cent. "Capping the prizes and cutting the fun is the route to equal distribution of very little."

Tory backbencher John Sykes, MP for Scarborough, urged her to "ignore the sanctimonious claptrap" from the churches.

If fortune did not exactly shine on Mrs Bottomley in last July's Cabinet shuffle, her new opposite number, Jack Cunningham, has had even less luck.

Voted off the Shadow Cab-

net last week, Mr Cunningham graciously accepted the Secretary of State's tongue-in-cheek commiserations. "As a life-long supporter of Newcastle United, I am well used to dealing with both triumph and disaster. It is just that the disasters have been too frequent recently."

Mr Cunningham said Camelot had been given one licence to print tickets and another to "print money". And he maintained the 1993 legislation setting up the Lottery gave Mrs Bottomley power to vary the company's take without waiting for the end of its contract.

Brushing aside Tory claims

that Camelot had taken a commercial risk, he said it was "a one-way bet in a one-horse race".

No one had envisaged such excessive profits, except perhaps Camelot in private, he said.

Mr Cunningham said he enjoyed playing the lottery himself. People bought tickets because they hoped they would win, but second they hoped that majority of what was left would go to good causes.

"Labour in office will ensure that when a new contract is due, it must be on a not-for-profit basis, thus releasing many more millions for the arts."

Mr Cunningham proposed

the establishment of a "Talent Fund" to help young athletes, musicians, artists, inventors and designers who at present struggled on alone or with just parental help.

It was one of the few areas where Mrs Bottomley was quick to acknowledge the merits of a Labour idea.

David Mellor, former heritage secretary and a self-proclaimed architect of the Lottery, warned the Government not to increase the amount of tax taken. Currently, the Treasury skims off 12 per cent from the lottery, but Mr Mellor said it originally had

"ambitions" for more.

The lottery was already "a nice little earner for our Ken", he said - an estimated £500m, so far plus corporation tax on Camelot's profits.

But he went on: "One gathers there are senior figures in the Treasury who still bear the bruises of what they regard as a defeat in failing to get a tax rate that was higher."

"And if anyone should have it in contemplation to introduce a higher tax rate in the forthcoming Budget, I really must urge them to think again."

"In the history of own goals, that would merit a chapter all on its own."

Labour imposes shortlists

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES

Labour's National Executive Committee yesterday set a course for achieving a record 90 women MPs at the next election after resolving to impose all-women shortlists for parliamentary selections in seven seats.

The move brings to a close the operation in England and Wales of the controversial quota system reserving for women half of all winnable marginals, and of safe seats where a Labour MP is retiring.

Labour's north-west region will be expected to select five key marginals and one safe seat for women-only lists in the next few weeks. Members of the national executive felt that there was no option but to impose the lists in the face of determined resistance from activists.

One list will also be imposed in the London region but a timetable has yet to be set. The party said about 50 women would fight in safe or winnable seats in addition to the 40 already sitting as MPs.

The NEC has signalled its determination to fulfil the quota in all regions by imposing all-female lists in Gravesend, Slough and Great Yarmouth. The North-western had proved particularly intractable in their resistance. Six sitting MPs are standing down and there are 12 marginals, requiring three women-only lists in the first category and six in the second. But only one target seat and two in which the sitting member was retiring had volunteered.

In the capital, the choice will be between Hayes & Harlington, Epsom and Bethnal Green & Bow, where a section of the membership has protested against the imposition of a list because the selection process had already begun.

Inside Parliament

Steven Goodwin

Heritage Secretary effused in the Commons. She plays it as a member of a family syndicate, she basks in the glow of its awards to charities and, to judge by her performance in the Labour-initiated debate, she believes it a first-rate political weapon.

"Labour's line on the lottery is simple - snuff out success, punish profit and cheat the good causes of the deal they deserve," she said.

The rhetoric was unchanged from her years as health secretary and so was her tactic of bombarding the House with statistics.



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Clarke told to clarify tax plans

DONALD MACINTYRE

Political Editor

Kenneth Clarke was under pressure last night to clarify plans to tax redundancy payments after claims of a sudden surge of applications by employees to leave their jobs before the Budget.

Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrats' Treasury spokesman, yesterday challenged the Chancellor to "come clean" about reports that he was planning to end tax exemption for the first £30,000 of redundancy payments.

The challenge came as Paddy Ashdown, the party leader, renewed his call on Mr Clarke not to deliver a tax cutting budget "for the short-term needs of the Conservative Party".

There have been strong hints that despite earlier reports that the Treasury was considering taxing redundancy pay it had now abandoned the idea.

Mr Bruce said that Mr Clarke had refused to confirm or deny the earlier reports and added: "I'm saying to Kenneth Clarke: 'Stop playing politics with people's lives and livelihoods - come to the House of Commons now and withdraw this madcap scheme.'"

A tax of the sort envisaged, Mr Bruce said, could hit as many as 500,000 people with tax bills of up to £12,000. He added that either Mr Clarke was planning a "cynical and cruel new tax on insecurity and unemployment", or he was unnecessarily allowing "thousands of employees to swing in the wind" between now and the Budget.

Both the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party claim to have been "inundated" with calls from worried employees considering taking redundancy.

Today's business

Communities: Northern Ireland questions; Prime Minister's Questions; Mental Health (Patients in the Community) Bill, remaining stages; Debate on salaries of ministers; Opposition Leader, Opposition whips and officers of Parliament; Private business - Accommodation (Level Crossings) Bill, Third Reading; Lords: Debate on report of select committee on sustainable development; Debate on decision to close accident and emergency department and acute bed provision at Edgware General hospital.

Princess Royal defended over Olympics criticism

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES

Political Correspondent

Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, yesterday defended the Princess Royal, a British representative on the International Olympic Committee, had not "puffed her weight" on behalf of Manchester's failed bid to bring the 2000 Games to Britain.

Mrs Bottomley defended the princess's refusal to engage in "wheelbarrow" to the National Heritage select committee, which is conducting the post-mortem examination as part of an investigation into British attempts to host international sporting events. She said: "I don't think it would have done our international reputation any good to have been involved in nefarious practice. We should behave like good sportsmen and women in these matters and abide by the Queensberry Rules."

The Princess and Dame Mary Glen Haig, a fellow IOC member, were criticised last week by Joe Ashton, Labour

MP for Bassetlaw and a member of the select committee, for regarding the business of lobbying "rather beneath them". There are suggestions that some IOC members have been criticised for lobbying the British bid.

Gerald Kaufman, the select committee's Labour chairman, last week suggested that the Princess should perhaps resign if she was too busy for her IOC duties.

But yesterday he read extracts of a letter from Dame Mary say-



Joe Ashton MP: Critical

ing: "Both the Princess and I regard lobbying in the style practised within the IOC as exceedingly distasteful, not in the least Olympic philosophy and certainly not with all the claims of fair play. We were never shy to make those views clear within Olympic circles."

She added: "The Princess openly declared her distaste for the valuable and too-readily accepted 'perks' seemingly directed at influencing votes, hence perhaps her alleged unpopularity with those reported to be 'powerful men in sport'."

Mr Kaufman said Barcelona and Atlanta had succeeded in hosting the Games without bid teams engaging in "nefarious practices".

He also added that when George Bush was United States President he had telephoned every member of the IOC to help Atlanta win the 1996 Games.

Sebastian Coe, Tory MP for Falkland and former Olympic gold medalist, said: "Bad bids do us no good at all and bids which are successful but are run badly are almost terminal."

CSA staff 'wrongly assessed 23% of maintenance claims'

GLENDIA COOPER

Nearly a quarter of assessments for maintenance payments made by the Child Support Agency were wrong, a report revealed yesterday.

The study, carried out by Ernie Hazlewood, the Government's chief child support officer, also found that although 15 per cent were for the right amount staff had not been following official guidelines in making the assessment.

Labour and child support groups immediately seized on Mr Hazlewood's report which showed only 29 per cent of all assessments on the amount owed by absent parents were definitely correct and made by staff following proper procedures. While improvements in accuracy had been achieved since the previous year, the report said that progress made

was still "disappointing". Staff are said to have made errors on nearly a quarter - 23 per cent - of cases, either sending out demands for too little or too much maintenance.

And in 28 per cent of cases, a lack of evidence meant it was not possible to tell whether the maintenance assessment had been correctly decided.

This report follows a highly critical one, published in June, by the National Audit Office. It found that fathers were paying up to £55 too much, and also that the agency was owed more than £500,000 in unpaid maintenance, a "significant" amount of which was not expected to be paid back.

Mr Hazlewood said that while some progress had been made there was "still some distance to go before standards may be regarded as generally acceptable" and the task ahead re-

mained "substantial". He added that he "looked to CSA management and staff building on signs of improvement and increasing its pace over the year."

Andrew Mitchell, the social security minister, said it showed the CSA was making "good and steady progress after a difficult start", but added: "The continuing requirement for improvement is substantial. The key elements are in place... and I expect the agency to use them effectively to produce the standards which all concerned have a right to expect."

But Labour claimed the report revealed a "shockingly high level of inaccuracy" by the CSA in making assessments for maintenance payments. The Network Against the Child Support Agency said the report showed that despite various changes "the agency is still in administrative chaos".

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news

There'd be zero point in going back. After all, I'm the only one who's beaten the system, so to speak. Even Jack Slipper would leave me to suffer in exile – **Ronnie Biggs**

Diamond mystery of the Great Train Robbery

PHIL DAVISON

Thirty years after Ronnie Biggs started his life on the run, the great train robber has hinted that the gang which carried out the famous railway theft may have been after something more than old banknotes – a package of priceless gems.

It was 30 years ago this week that Biggs last saw England following his escape from Wandsworth prison. Now 66, he has lived in Rio de Janeiro for 25 years after initial plastic surgery in Paris and more than four years in Australia.

It is not difficult to believe that he blew his "whack" from the robbery on 8 August 1963 – £147,000 then, the equivalent of close to £2m now – on the escape to Australia and the first few years of extravagance. But what if there had been a bunch of uncut diamonds on board the famous Glasgow-Euston train.

The first intimation that there might have been diamonds on board the train came from Biggs' QC, Michael Argyle, some years ago.

But now Biggs himself has suggested that they might have been on the train. "I didn't see any diamonds. But somebody nicked them," he said.

Further hints about the presence of gems on board the train emerge in Biggs' first novel, *Keep on Running*, which "draws on the true events surrounding the Great Train Robbery". In the book, Biggs writes that 50 uncut diamonds were snatched from the train along with the cash-filled mailbags.

One of the robbers, named in the book as David and one of three gang members never caught, got away with around half the diamonds, whose total value may have been more than the £2.6m cash haul, according to the novel to be published in Britain on 31 October.

The rest of the book echoes the "crime of the century" and begs the question whether the book is fact or fiction. For example, could the man who got



away with the diamonds have been Biggs and not "David"? "No way," said Biggs. "Scotland Yard always knew it never got the entire gang. But the whole principle of that robbery was that no one would talk. Old Bill could chop your legs off and you wouldn't grass on your mates."

"The book is fact mixed with fiction. It's basically the facts with a dash of fiction," Biggs insisted. "The story is very close to the facts. But I had to disguise the identities of the people involved."

The three robbers who got away are given the pseudonyms David, Freddie and George. The latter, in real life, was the "heavy" who coshed train driver, Jack Mills, but was never caught, according to Biggs. In the prologue, Biggs said he wrote the book after "Freddie" called him to congratulate him on 30 years on the run. "Ron, you tell the story," he said. "You know what happened ... but no real names, Ronnie, not even the initials."

The man described on the jacket of his autobiography as "truly the quintessential lovable rogue of our time" spoke as he sipped a beer in his hillside apartment in Santa Teresa.

Biggs' 21-year-old, Mike, whose mother was the train robber's former girlfriend, Raimunda, sat on the arm of his dad's armchair in a T-shirt reading.

It was Raimunda's pregnancy that allowed Biggs to stay in Brazil in 1974 after the Scotland Yard detective, Jack Slipper, tried to detain him in Rio. Biggs also has two grown-up sons in Australia, Chris and Farley.

The novel is far from Biggs' first money-spinning venture, developed on the back of his notoriety. He has recorded punk songs (as with the Sex Pistols in 1978), appeared in Brazilian television adverts (for burglary alarms) and run "The Biggs Experience" – inviting British tourists to listen to his robbery tales in return for \$50 a head.

The book is likely to bring in a few badly needed bob for the former petty crook from Brixton, but believes he helped "create a major moment in history. The train robbery was the last decent crime".

His next project? "A cookery book. With a difference. I want to call it *Autobiography of a Cook*, but there'll be an 'x' wedged between the letters 'c' and 'o'. The idea is that I'd steal all the recipes, give them different names and no one would

ever know they'd been filched. Porridge would, of course, be included since I've done so much of it."

Biggs is now slightly hunched, but he is still an imposing, charming and youthful figure although the 1965 plastic surgery has left his cheeks bloated. His longtime companion is an Argentine-born woman, Ulla, whom he has known 20 years. "We're sort of good mates but we keep our separate lairs."

After his usual request for cash in return for an interview – "times are hard" – he settled for a "decent" lunch and a few beers in his local *amazon*, or



Life's a beach: Ronnie Biggs in Rio de Janeiro with his son, Mike and his girlfriend, and (above left) the train after the robbery in 1963. Photograph: Steve Morgan

grocery store-cum-bar, where the Englishman in the flat cap and trendy, though greying, pony-tail is a local hero. He has, after all, lived here or hereabouts for 25 years. His only excursions abroad were to Argentina and Bolivia to renew his (borrowed and falsified) passport in the early months of his stay and a cruise to Barbados in 1981 after he was kidnapped by a group of former British soldiers. A Barbados court eventually returned him to Brazil rather than Britain.

In the bar, the drinks appear to be endlessly on the house, while, in the *churrascaria*, or

steakhouse, "Senhor Beeg-ee" gets the best cuts. On a bus to Botafogo beach, passengers nod to Biggs and smile.

Biggs said he had heard nothing from the Brazilian authorities about any change in his status now that Mike has turned 21 and legally no longer needs protection. Nor did he seem concerned over a new extradition treaty between Britain and Brazil that is likely to renew Scotland Yard's interest in him.

"I don't think that treaty had the vaguest thing to do with Ronnie Biggs," he told me. "When Mike turned 21 in August, I had all of Fleet Street on

the line, saying, 'are yer knees knockin', Ronnie?'. But I've heard nothing from the Brazilians and I don't expect to."

He remains aware of the dangers of returning to England. "I wake up every morning and the first thing I do is make a nice cup of tea. But if I went back to England, I'd have to go to jail. I got 30 years and only served a year and a half."

"If I went back, I feel they'd be obliged to reduce my sentence. I believe the Home Secretary could reduce it but I'm not sure he'd want to. I'd rather fight to the last round. I think there'd be zero point in going

back. After all, I'm the only one who's beaten the system, so to speak."

"I think secretly even Jack Slipper would be quite happy to see me left 'to suffer in lonely exile', as he once put it ... I suppose if you asked me what I wanted out of life, it would be to live in complete freedom to come and go as I like."

Any regrets? "I don't think anyone should have any regrets ... You're an adult, you know the difference between right and wrong, and if you go down, you have to bite the bullet. That's part and parcel of the whole scam, you know?"

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Local partnerships 'central' for revival of deprived areas

A new breed of social entrepreneur has helped turn around some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Britain, an independent charity said yesterday. Their dynamic, community-based organisations add to the creation of wealth in local neighbourhoods and should play a "central role" in regenerating disadvantaged inner cities. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is calling for 18 disadvantaged neighbourhoods to be given the opportunity to set up a "community sector" alongside government and private sector initiatives.

The foundation's report, *Slaying the Golem*, finds that 20 pioneering organisations have not only improved the quality of life in their community, but have added to local wealth creation by a new breed known as "the social entrepreneur" - individuals who are skilled at developing local partnerships, assembling public, private, charitable and European funding.

Such non-profit making organisations include housing associations, community development trusts and church projects, and have introduced a wide range of work programmes and advice. Some organisations have remained firmly in their home neighbourhood, while others have sought European funding and two Northern Ireland trusts have established links with North America.

Success stories include Miles

Glenda Cooper reports on the work of the new breed of community-based social entrepreneurs

Plattin Community Enterprises in Manchester which is taking over the £12m redevelopment of the derelict Victoria Mill to provide workspace, community facilities and over 100 homes. In June, the Aston-based Birmingham Settlement launched a community bank to lend to small business and community based enterprises.

Community Links in London says it increases the disposable income of some of the poorest people in London by £2m a year by giving them effective benefit advice. In Londonderry, the Inner City Trust has redeveloped derelict sites within the old city walls to provide shops, offices, a craft village, a youth hostel, heritage centre and museum so far. Plans are also under way for a hotel and a music centre.

Stephen Thake, the report's author, said that 18 pilot schemes could be set up rapidly if the Urban Forum, the National Council of Voluntary Organisations, and local authority associations were brought together. He argued that extra money would not be required because grants could be allocated from the Single Regeneration Budget, which pulls together urban funding from

five government departments.

"For change to become permanent within a neighbourhood there has to be a continuous investment in improving the well-being, skills and quality of life. That makes it vital that regeneration programmes are designed in ways that will ensure their survival beyond the initial flurry of activity. Community regeneration organisations that are accountable to local people can play a central role in ensuring that the task of social, economic and physical improvements is sustained," Mr Thake said.

David Liston-Jones, for the Department of the Environment, said the Government welcomed the report, but questions regarding the way in which such a partnership would operate still had to be considered.



Jubilee jig: Members of a dance group rehearse at the October Gallery in central London for Silver Jubilee celebrations to mark 25 years of the Tibetan community's presence in Britain. The three-day festival which features dance, music and song, begins today. Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

Helping poor to help themselves

GLENDIA COOPER

When Community Links in Canning Town was set up 18 years ago, it operated out of a lock-up shop and helped children and young people.

Now David Robinson, its director, estimates the organisation uses 50 different premises and has increased the income of some of the poorest people in Newham by £3m a year in total, by advising them on benefits to which they were entitled.

Its great strength, he says, is that 80 per cent of volunteers have come along first as users. The volunteers - over 300 of them, supported by 30 paid staff - range from the unemployed who give up their time, to those working who spare a couple of hours in the evening. And it works, he feels, because people regain their self respect.

Community Links now runs parent and toddler groups, toy libraries, teenage parent groups, after-school clubs, youth clubs and holiday play schemes. It runs a "street corner to employment" centre for young people and money advice services for adults. Its own running costs are three-quarters of a million pounds a year.

"It's all based on the way in which we began, which is that there had to be a better way to solve local problems in what is the most deprived borough in the country," Mr Robinson, 36, said. "There is a very strong commitment to do things ourselves based on training, supporting, enabling."

One of the most successful projects so far is the advice given to residents on claiming benefits. "Many people come into our advice sessions not claiming the benefit they are en-



David Robinson: 'Helping people regain self respect'

itled to because they are not familiar with the written language or even spoken English. "It may be that the elderly were getting what they were entitled to when they first became pensioners but subsequently the rules changed and they didn't know," Mr Robinson said.

"It's important even if it's just £2 a week but if you're on the breadline it's significant."

The organisation also does a lot with difficult children, particularly older ones who play truant from school or have been excluded. "It takes a variety of particular forms - play schemes, holidays away, youth groups."

"People in the past have been very passive recipients of charity ... Now this is the first step to be able to give something themselves. It's the first step towards fulfilling yourself, building your self esteem. These people often can't do much about their lives but this is something they can do for someone else."

Landowners call for rare bird curb

JOHN ARLIDGE
Scotland Correspondent

Rare birds of prey, including falcons, buzzards, and hen harriers, should be called to arrest the sharp decline in stocks of grouse and other moorland birds, Scottish landowners said yesterday.

The Scottish Landowners' Federation (SLF) called on the Government to relax the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act to allow gamekeepers to shoot raptors, which are currently a protected species. The federation, whose 4,000 members own around 3m hectares of the Highlands, argues that measures to protect birds of prey have proved too successful.

Raptors are now destroying moorland birds, including plovers and lapwings, lairs

claim. The decline in grouse stocks has been particularly rapid, threatening to wipe out the £20m-a-year shooting industry.

Graeme Gordon, the head of the SLF, told an environmental conference in Perth yesterday that the rising number of birds of prey had upset the balance of nature. Mr Gordon is confident the SLF will persuade the Government to change the law. The federation has begun lobbying through the Department of the Environment's Raptor Working Group, which was set up earlier this year.

But officials at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds deny raptors are to blame for the reduction in moorland bird stocks. Instead, they point to poor land management, in particular, the widespread destruction of heather moorland.



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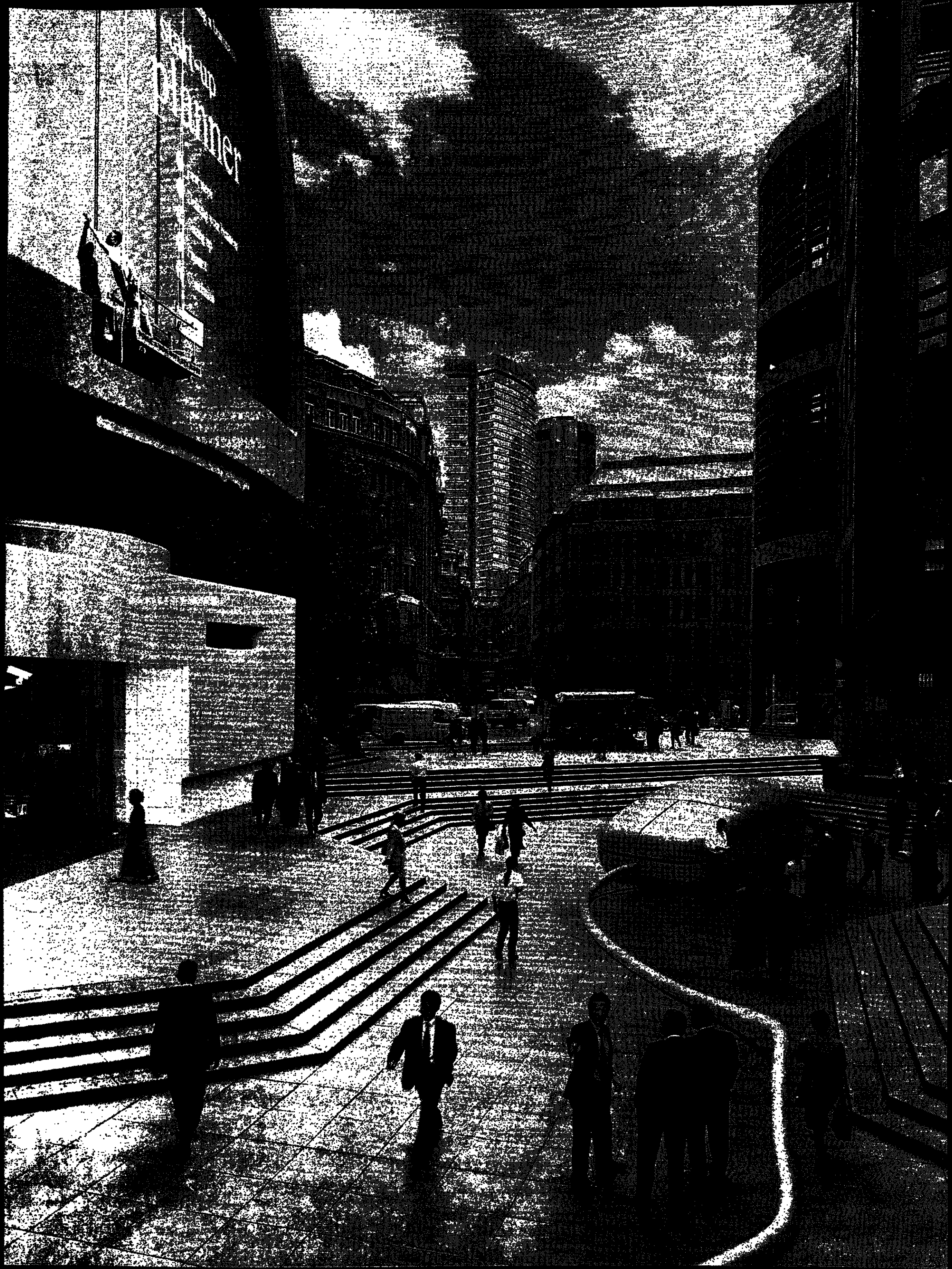
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DAILY POEM

when child

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Media mogul's church buys historic Rainbow rock venue

Silence drawn over £2.3m purchase that helps Brazilian organisation expand in Britain. **John McKie** reports

Once it rocked to The Beatles, Van Morrison and David Bowie, Punk fans rioted when The Clash appeared there in 1977. Four years earlier, 6,000 went on the rampage when they couldn't get tickets for The Osmonds.

Now, one of London's most famous rock venues, The Rainbow, will reverberate to little more than the sound of prayer and the chorus of confessional. The Rainbow, once known as The Astoria, has been sold to a mysterious Brazilian religious organisation known as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG).

Last October, property company Prior Kirschel Properties bought the theatre - in Finsbury Park, north London - with the intention of returning it to its rock 'n' roll status.

Instead of selling to a music promoter, as PKP had hoped, it was bought by the Brazilian church for £2.35m.

The organisation already has one church in Britain: in Brixton, south London. No one in this country has authority to talk on its behalf. Renato Cordoso, a pastor at the church, said: "There isn't anybody in this country who has the authorisation to give out information about the church."

Asked for the name of anyone abroad who could give information, Mr Cordoso said: "I am not able to tell you that."

The UCKG is known to be interested in broadening its British base. In June, it bid a reported £4.5m for the Brixton Academy, where the Rolling



Congregation at Universal Church in Brixton. The Rainbow (centre), and Van Morrison (right), who appeared at the venue during its heyday



Main photograph: Jane Baker

Stones closed their Voodoo Lounge tour. Instead it was bought two weeks ago by the leisure company Break For The Border which owns restaurants, bars and the Shepherds Bush Empire, which has recently hosted acts such as Blur and Elvis Costello. The UCKG then turned its attentions to The Rainbow, which it secured last

week. The theatre, which closed as an entertainment venue in 1981, is currently boarded up and needs considerable refurbishment. Laurence Kirschel, a PKP director, said the company felt no qualms about accepting the bid from the little-known organisation.

He said: "It would have been nice to have seen the building

open as a rock venue, but there were costs to be maintained. We accepted the church's bid ahead of a couple of other bids because their references were better. They have bases in 25 different countries I know of and the people they worked with had nothing but good to say about them."

The church's only UK rep-

resentative is Gavin Brent, who acted as its agent in the deals at Brixton and Finsbury Park. The UCKG has barred him from talking to the press.

He would only say: "I am involved with them but I have been instructed by them not to discuss matters with the press."

Pastor Renato Cordoso would only say: "We have our reasons for that." The main reason might be "Bishop" Edir Macedo. He is head of the Universal Church and one of Brazil's media magnates. He founded the UCKG in the slum areas of Rio de Janeiro, reportedly buying the Church's headquarters from undertakers. Now he owns two of Brazil's biggest-selling newspapers, a

television network and 30 radio stations in the country. Five MPs in India's congress are UCKG supporters.

The national newspaper *Journal de Brazil* has reported that the UCKG now reaches 46 countries. It has its strongest following in Brazil, and the paper reported its annual worldwide turnover as \$8m Brazilian dol-

lars (£5.3m). The *Journal* has cited South Africa, Uganda, Malawi, the US, Mexico and France and Italy as UCKG bases, with Britain the next stop. Its members are reported to pay 10 per cent of all their earnings to the Church - Brazilian newspaper reports have suggested that the Church regularly checks this payment.

Macedo was prosecuted in 1992 and jailed briefly. He left Brazil last year and reported sightings have since been made in Miami, Cape Town and Lisbon.

Ligia Lima, spokeswoman for the Brazilian government, confirmed: "He has been prosecuted by the federal tax system in 1992 and was jailed for two weeks, maximum. He's a very famous and followed by a legion of admirers. He is believed to be in the US and the prosecutions are continuing. It's a very delicate matter."

Macedo must be hoping for an easier time in Britain. At the UCKG meeting I attended in Brixton, a congregation of 20, with only three males, was exhorted in loud prayer by the pastor to purge themselves of problems by giving their lives to Jesus Christ.

A collection was held but no-one was obliged to give money. It holds three services on Monday to Friday, four on Saturdays plus two every Sunday.

In Finsbury Park, an Anglican priest, Nigel Hartley said: "I dislike the secrecy. It's wrong to offer people a deluded kind of hope. People are not going to get anything from a short-term fix."

Risk to men shown in suicide rates

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

There have been significant rises in the suicide rates for men in Britain and the Irish Republic, according to the first Europe-wide survey of suicide.

In Spain, however, it is the rise in suicide by women that is a cause for concern, and the biggest increase in the rate of death has been in 1994.

The highest suicide rates in the European Union are in Denmark - almost three times that of the UK and 2.5 times higher than the death toll from road accidents. Greece has by far the lowest number of suicides at just under 4 per 100,000 of population, followed by Spain at 7.5 and Italy at 7.6, although levels are rising in these countries.

The report, by Befrienders International, the international arm of the Samaritans, also highlights the plight of the "solitary young male" who cannot

communicate his distress except via his computer. Eighty per cent of contacts to the Samaritans service on the Internet are about suicidal feelings.

Yanna Scott, director general of Befrienders International, warned that suicide was a major avoidable cause of death, claiming the lives of 43,822 people a year in the 12 member states studied between mid-1992 and mid-1994, at a rate of 12.67 per 100,000.

Fewer than half of the countries surveyed had a national policy on suicide and there is no EU suicide prevention policy. Suicide prevention services are minimal or fragmented in many countries, and education is also lacking. "Unless you inform people of the risk of suicide people are not going to be able to talk about it and express their fears," Ms Scott said.

Ms Scott said that the comparatively low rates in some southern European countries may be due to a strong Catholic tradition in which suicide is a taboo subject. "But the extended family is still in place in many of these countries," Ms Scott added. "Where you have an integrated system you tend to have support for the individual."

In Denmark, where the suicide rate is significantly lower than it was a few years ago, there is no obvious explanation for the alarming number of deaths. The report recommends that suicide is given a higher priority by EU states, which should develop national policies with investment in publishing awareness and prevention services.

Study of Suicide Prevention within the European Community, price £15 from Befrienders International, 23 Elysium Gate, 126 New Kings Road, London SW6 4LA.

Suicide rate



DAILY POEM

A stolen child

By John Burnside

My father would say
I belonged to someone else:
the father had come in the night, invading his house
with spells, and the mouse-smell of henlock.

And I would go out at dusk
to the edge of the world,
finding the snow-flavoured gaps
in the swimming barley
and searching for the palace of the king

who might be disguised as a tramp, in an old black coat,
bobbing for mice and hedgehogs in the weeds
and changing them into the semblance
of children, to fill his house
with pockets of warmth, like games for the cold to enjoy.

John Burnside was born in Dunsferrline, Fife, in 1955. He read English and European Studies at Cambridge College of Arts and Technology and has since worked as a risk analyst in computers. He has published five collections of poetry, the first, *The Hoop* (1985) which won a Scottish Arts Council Literary Award. *The Myth of the Twin*, his fourth collection, was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize and in 1994 he won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize, a recognition of his "singular music" and "exquisite precision of language". This poem is taken from *Swimming in the Flood*, just published by Jonathan Cape, at £2.95.

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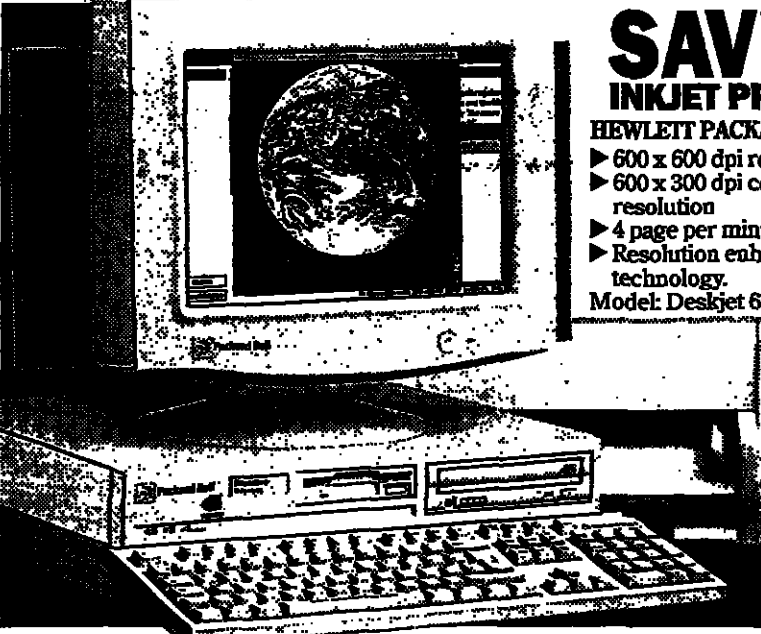
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Gonzalez loses vote on budget

Madrid (AP) — Felipe Gonzalez insisted yesterday he would not call elections until next spring, minutes after opposition parties voted down his government's proposed 1996 budget.

"You have to know how to win and lose a parliamentary motion," Mr Gonzalez told reporters after parliament rejected the minority Socialist government's budget by 183 votes to 153 with one abstention in the 350-seat lower house. Only the Socialists voted in favour.

Responding to his first parliamentary defeat since he took office 13 years ago, the Prime Minister indicated his government would continue trying to pass legislation and remain in office through Spain's presidency of the European Union which ends on 31 December. "I think there is a majority to pass pending legislation," he said after his former allies of the Catalan nationalist coalition joined the conservative Popular Party (PP) to defeat the budget.

The vote was an indication of just how far Mr Gonzalez's star has fallen since the Socialists swept into office in 1982 with

more than 40 per cent of the vote. Opinion polls indicate that a wave of scandals has made deep inroads in his credibility and that the PP would win if elections were held now.

Opposition parties had announced they would reject the budget as a symbolic vote of no confidence in order to force Mr Gonzalez to dissolve parliament and call immediate early elections.

"This is not the time for working on and debating budget proposals, but rather for clarifying electoral [issues]," said Joaquim Molins, spokesman for the Catalan Convergence and Union coalition which had backed the Socialists' minority government from June 1993 until September. But Mr Gonzalez, who has insisted since last July he would not call elections until next March, a year ahead of schedule, reiterated that he would stick to that timetable.

The PP leader, Jose Maria Aznar, said that the government's credibility has been thrown into question by the budget defeat. But the Finance

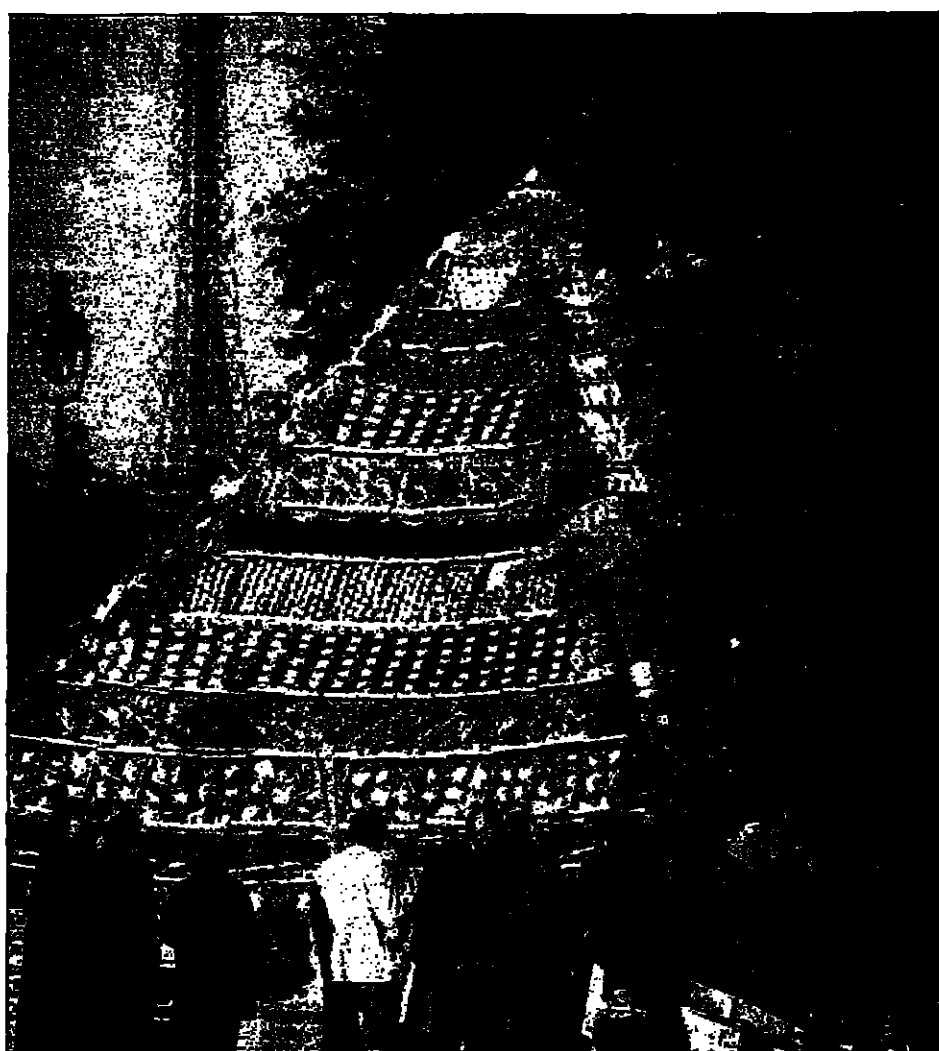
Minister, Pedro Solbes, countered that the opposition ought to call for a vote of no confidence rather than subject the nation's economy to "unnecessary uncertainty".

Mr Solbes said that if the budget were defeated, the 1995 budget would automatically be extended to next year.

Parliament and the Spanish media have spent most of their time since last spring focused on scandals involving Socialist Party officials and appointees.

A former interior minister and 13 former law officials have been implicated through judicial investigations in the GAL (Armed Liberation Group) death squads case. The GAL killed 29 people in southern France between 1983 and 1987 in a campaign against the Basque separatist group ETA.

Other scandals have involved a former Socialist Party finance chief charged with illegal campaign financing, a former Civil Guard general accused of amassing a fortune through embezzlement, and a former Bank of Spain governor charged with insider trading.



Making their point: Farmers build a pyramid of fruits and vegetables in Paris as part of a protest against growers' economic woes. Photograph: Lionel Cironneau/AP

Mujahedin threatens 'disturb' UN in Bosnia

British soldiers have been targeted by extremists, says Christopher Bellamy

The United Nations said yesterday it was "extremely disturbed" about threats to British soldiers and aid workers following the shooting of a Muslim soldier by a British peace-keeper. But UN sources denied there was an organised "vendetta" against British personnel in central Bosnia, as the British Defence Secretary, Michael Portillo, had told Parliament on Tuesday.

The UN spokesman, Chris Guinness, said the UN will "hold the Bosnian government responsible for threats or action against British personnel".

British army patrols have been strengthened as a precaution and British drivers have been stopped from taking part in UN convoys, said Lieutenant Colonel Chris Vernon, the UN spokesman in Sarajevo.

As the ceasefire in Bosnia takes hold, all three factions have moved battle-weary units from the front line. On the Bosnian government side, these include extreme Muslim Mujahedin from other Islamic countries.

Their appearance in areas away from the front has put the UN peace-keeping forces on their guard and led to tension between the UN and Muslim forces in the past three weeks.

The Bosnian government army has continued to restrict UN's freedom of movement, even when the UN is trying to attend meetings with Bosnian commanders to discuss the ceasefire. However, military sources said recent incidents involving Mujahedin are probably the work of individuals who have been pulled out of the front line after being used as shock troops.

The UN has been negotiating with the Bosnian forces' commanders to get them to try and control the extreme Mujahedin element.

One group, which is estimated to number between 800 and 1,500 Mujahedin, is based in a factory in the village of Potocje, near Zenica, in the Muslim heartland of central Bosnia. The number of Mujahedin has increased recently, probably owing to the recruitment of bitter, vengeful soldiers who were displaced from the former Muslim enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa.

"They're not given a designation as such 'let Mujahedin battalion' or anything like that", a UN officer said yesterday.

"They're not exclusively foreign. They have people from former Yugoslavia and from external Muslim states".

Mujahedin have been sent to the front line in small groups and used as storm troops in the most dangerous missions. When they return to areas populated by less orthodox Bosnian Muslims, they sometimes cause trouble. In Zenica, Mujahedin recently kidnapped a baby in a pram because they disapproved of the baby's Bosnian Muslim mother wearing a short skirt, and refused to release it until she dressed in traditional Muslim garb.

The Mujahedin, therefore, are unpopular with local Muslims and with the Bosnian government, but their prowess as shock troops means they are tolerated. Two years ago the Bosnian government command in the Vitez area, near Zenica, asked the British battalion to wipe out a group of about 40, but the British said that was outside their UN mandate.

Warnings of a possible "vendetta" followed an incident on 5 October when a British UN soldier shot and killed a Bosnian soldier in Donji Vakuf, which the Bosnians had recently captured from the Serbs. The British Army said he had fired in self defence.

On 10 October a vehicle carrying four UN military observers was ambushed between Bugojno and Novi Travnik, apparently by Mujahedin. Three of the four UN observers were from Muslim states.

On 22 October a Norwegian aid convoy was stopped by Mujahedin near Tuzla. The Mujahedin asked if they were British, but on being told they were Norwegian, let them go.

Washington — The presidents of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia will meet with the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, in Moscow next Tuesday, delaying by a day the start of US-led peace talks, it was announced yesterday, AP reports. The announcement, made first by US officials in Washington, reflects US and Russian efforts to work together on any settlement of the Bosnian peace plan.

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Diarist withdraws 'embarrassing' tales of European politics

SARAH HELM
Brussels

Ritt Bjerregaard, the Danish European Commissioner, admitted yesterday that it would be unfair and wrong to publish her controversial diaries, and announced that she would be withdrawing the book.

The decision will avert a major scandal within the Commission, which has been angered by the wilful behaviour of Ms Bjerregaard and by the deeply embarrassing nature of some of her revelations. The diaries include criticisms of many European leaders and chatter indiscreetly about the wearisome nature of EU politicking. Jacques Santer, the Commission President, has no power to sack Ms Bjerregaard. Anxious that the revelations would trivialise the workings of the Commission and undermine its authority, he pressed her to scrap the book.

A spokesman for Mr Santer said yesterday: "The President of the Commission is very pleased... He thinks it is a wise decision that will allow the Commission to really concentrate on its tasks at hand." The statement was a clear message to Ms Bjerregaard that she should get on with her job as environment commissioner, rather than spend the time undermining her colleagues. In Denmark, which takes a strong line on environment issues, there has been strong criticism of Ms Bjerregaard, who has been accused of damaging the country's reputation in Europe.

A contrite Ms Bjerregaard said yesterday: "Good friends have felt abused and deceived, and colleagues with whom I relate well in work have felt that I was overstepping some limits. This I regret very much." Just two days ago Ms Bjerregaard insisted that her revelations were meant to be "friendly" and were intended to inform the public about European political life. But publicity given to the book was so intense that it al-

most over-shadowed the debate in Strasbourg on Tuesday over French nuclear tests. The Commissioner, responsible for nuclear safety, was clearly taken aback by the publicity, and by speculation on how much money she stood to earn from publishing the diaries.



Contrite: Ritt Bjerregaard said friends felt 'deceived'

The extracts published so far have caused a flurry of irritation in a number of high places. Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, is accused of "not paying any attention at all" in meetings. President Jacques Chirac is described in dismissive terms by Ms Bjerregaard as a man who "gave a very bad impression... I don't even think Mr Chirac will grow in stature with his post."

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French board protest ship in Brindisi

Brindisi (AP Reuter) — French commandos boarded a Greenpeace ship yesterday after anti-nuclear activists from the group tried to block a French warship in Brindisi harbour.

The *Albatros*, flying the Dutch flag, entered the harbour with four inflatable vessels to try to keep the destroyer *Dupleix* in port. Activists painted "Stop nuclear tests" on the side of the *Dupleix* and chained themselves to the moorings of the ship, which was in Brindisi for Nato exercises.

Giuseppe Onufrio, a Greenpeace activist on board the *Albatros*, said: "French commandos ... boarded our boat, broke the glass of the windows in the bridge and threw in six tear-gas grenades. The French have committed an act of war in Italian waters."

Witnesses said the crew of the *Albatros* seemed to lose control of the ship for about 10 minutes after the commandos boarded. The commandos had axes and forced the Greenpeace crew to abandon ship.

Sailors on the *Dupleix* used water cannon to swamp the inflatables and flood the *Albatros*' engine-room. The French then started the engines of the abandoned ship, sending it crashing against the docks. The *Albatros*' rudder was damaged, Greenpeace said. Some Italian MPs asked for an investigation of the French retaliation.

The *Albatros* was commanded by an Englishman, Dave Enever, who was arrested in July when a command of *Rainbow Warrior II* when she was boarded by French commandos near the nuclear test site at Mururoa.

Captain Enever, from Frinton, Essex, said: "I couldn't believe that in an Italian port another member of the EU could do something like that. They threw tear-gas grenades, smashed windows and poured tons of water down the funnel and into the engine-room. There's so much water between decks you get a free shower every time you move." Capt Enever said the commandos were "losing their hard-man act".

"While we were off the bridge they put the engines into reverse and the ship almost demolished an Italian Customs boat before she hit the dock. We are holed above the waterline and we won't be sailing anywhere until repairs are carried out."

Two other Britons on board the *Albatros* yesterday were named as Geoff Sheldon and Elizabeth Blake. Greenpeace organised protests against France after it decided to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

Kohl seeks to keep French link alive

IMRE KARACS
Bonn

With his image abroad in tatters and the national currency on the slide, President Jacques Chirac of France flew into Bonn last night for a hastily arranged tête-à-tête with the man regarded as the most important politician in Europe, Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Presented as a routine oil change for the Franco-German axis, the visit none the less had the appearance of a full-blown salvage operation. The German government is visibly irritated with the inauspicious start to the Chirac presidency, particularly with Mr Chirac's failure to deliver on his election promise to cut the budget deficit.

The issue goes to the heart of European integration. Mr Kohl's cherished project, France and Germany will drive next year's European Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) and a weak and isolated France would reduce Germany's leverage, threatening to bring the entire process to a halt. On most issues that is unlikely, but there are signs of near panic in Germany that the flag-

Economics Minister, Günter Rexrodt, is a sceptic. Mr Rexrodt has gone so far as to suggest last week that Germany might have to be postponed beyond 1999 — a statement he was forced to retract later.

Equally confused is the attitude of the Germans of Frankfurt. The Bundesbank, custodian of the unshrinking Deutschmark, insists there can be no currency union without strict adherence to the convergence criteria. But the country's six most influential economic institutes still in a joint report on Tuesday that monetary union should go ahead regardless, so that German exporters' punch-drunk from a high Deutschmark can start competing on equal terms.

Whoever Mr Kohl listens to, the ultimate fate of monetary union rests with President Chirac, a situation which the imperious German leader must find frustrating. It is rather like the position Bonn has been bounced into by the French nuclear tests. As Mr Chirac discovered yesterday when he was greeted by protesters on arrival, the Mururoa tests did not enhance Franco-German friendship. Paris's offer to allow EU countries to shelter under the French nuclear umbrella merely added insult to injury.

Beside their revisionist at the French actions, Germans suspect that France is trying to drive a wedge between Europe's fledgling security institutions and the US-led Nato. The offer of a time-share in the *force de frappe* was politely but firmly rejected. "Germany will do anything to avoid the United States disengaging from the defence of Europe," says a German foreign policy expert.

But despite that disagreement, security is an issue on which the two countries have been able to find common ground. Last week, Bonn tentatively agreed to pay some of the costs of the French spy satellite Helios-2, another device clearly intended by France to sideline the US. And now that German troops are on their way to the former Yugoslavia, military co-operation between Bonn and Paris will at last move beyond the purely symbolic.

The two countries have also made some progress in recent weeks over the vexed question of the reform of Europe's political institutions. A flurry of talks between Paris and Bonn has produced new initiatives, to be presented jointly at next year's IGC. But here, too, disagreements remain. On key questions, such as the eastward enlargement of the European Union, the gap remains wide.

And on the fundamental question of the EU's future, German suspicions are hard to dispel. Germany is yet to be convinced that France is willing to surrender sovereignty to a Europe-wide body which Bonn hopes will one day become the government of a federal Europe.



View from the bridge: Greenpeace marks President Chirac's visit to Bonn with a protest against nuclear tests

Photograph: Ulli Michel/Reuter

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Doubts mar joy as Israelis quit town

ERIC SILVER
Jenin

Yasser Arafat's portrait beams in technicolour triumph from the top of a pillar in the main street of Jenin, the first of the six West Bank towns Israeli forces will evacuate over the next two months. The Arabic slogan beneath it reads: "Today Jenin, tomorrow Jerusalem!"

The pull-out began yesterday, but will not be completed for three weeks. Israeli police withdrew from the main police station, although a handful of soldiers remained behind.

A five-man Palestinian police liaison team arrived from Jericho and joined Israeli officers at a new District Co-ordinating Office on a caravan site at the entrance to the town. But the Palestinian police are not yet patrolling Jenin.

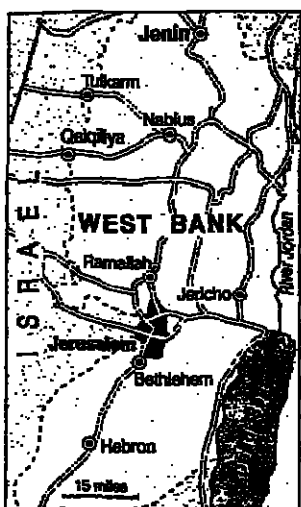
The hand-over will be phased and monitored. Neither side can afford to let it go wrong. But Jenin, a hill town of 44,000 Arab inhabitants at the far northern end of the West Bank, no longer feels like occupied territory.

The shame of 26 years of Israeli military rule has evaporated. The black, white, red-and-green Palestinian flag, which was once a symbol of defiance that could land you in jail or in hospital, is flying everywhere. Shopkeepers have strung banners across the streets welcoming Mr Arafat and his Palestinian National Authority.

Talal Assad, 32, a postal clerk, estimated that 90 per cent of the townspeople supported the PLO leader. An opinion poll earlier this month found more than 70 per cent of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians endorsed the peace process.

On the eve of the Jenin pull-back, householders painted over the graffiti of the seven-year Intifada uprising. Yesterday, local authority workers were sprucing up the graves of 45 Iraqi soldiers killed in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, who are buried in a military cemetery next to the co-ordinating office.

Outside, lest anyone should forget, a crippled Jordanian tank, vintage 1967, stands beside a memorial to the Israeli troops who were killed during the Six-Day War that year.



The future is still uncertain, but in front of the police station dozens of young men, all of them Intifada veterans, were convinced that it would be better. "Jenin is fighters' country," Naji Sha'er, a popular wedding singer, chanted. "But on this glorious day we are ending our war," they responded. "Today is a festival in Jenin."

Ala Jarar, 26, a hairdresser and mother of two, explained: "Life was very hard for us during the Intifada. You couldn't do what you wanted. We couldn't take our children to do anything beautiful. All the kids did was throw stones at Israelis. Now I hope my children can live like children all over the world."

Ali Hamad, 23, an unemployed labourer, spent two years in an Israeli jail for security offences. "I feel very happy," he said in impeccable Hebrew. "Today we are seeing the fruits of everything that we did during the Intifada."

But behind the facade of joy, the Palestinians in the street are waiting for answers. "If there is peace, why are some of our people still behind bars?" asked another prison graduate who would identify himself only as Ahmad.

"Will there still be checkpoints outside town?" he asked. "I don't want Israeli soldiers ordering me to put my hands up and spread my legs. That's not peace."

Ahmad, who is 38, has been denied entry to Israel because of his resistance record since 1993. To feed his wife and eight children, he has scraped around for casual construction jobs on the West Bank. It was enough to live on, he said, but no more.

Jenin has no industry and the rocky terrain offers little scope for farming. Unlike its more prosperous West Bank neighbour, Nablus, the town shows no sign of a building boom. The peace dividend, if and when foreign investors can be attracted, is a remote dream.

Then there is the unfinished business of the peace negotiations. "When are we going to get the rest of Palestine?" asked a rare dissenter, who declined to give his name, but works as a chemist.

Another in a coffee shop opposite the Iraqi cemetery asked: "What about the Jewish settlers? What will happen on the ground after the Israeli soldiers leave? Will I be able to go to Israel? Will I be able to visit Jerusalem? Half of my family lives in exile. Will they be able to come back?"



Welcome home: Crowds mob the first batch of Palestinian police in Jenin

Photograph: Jerome Delay/AP

Britain expels Iraqi for London spying

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY

An Iraqi diplomat is being expelled from Britain for passing information to Baghdad that could have been used to kill Iraqi dissidents in London.

The Foreign Office announced yesterday that Khamis Khalef Al Ajili, the administrative attaché at the Iraqi Inter-Section of the Jordanian Embassy in Kensington has been declared *persona non grata* and has been given until 31 October to leave the country with his family. He is accused of "activities incompatible with his diplomatic status". This usually means spying and, in this case, is understood to mean surveillance and targeting of Iraqi dissidents in the UK.

Jeremy Hanley, the Foreign Office minister responsible for the Middle East, took the decision after security services had apparently obtained evidence that Mr Ajili was acting in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 687, passed after the end of the Gulf War, which requires Iraq to stop acts of terrorism, including those against Iraqi dissidents in foreign countries.

Baghdad has long been concerned about opponents of President Saddam Hussein's regime operating abroad. Two months ago, the President's two sons-in-law fled to Jordan, joining hundreds of Iraqis round the world who are working to overthrow the regime.

Diplomatic relations between Britain and Iraq were broken off in February 1991 after he started the Gulf War. Britain has no diplomats in Iraq but, under the Vienna convention, both countries retained the right to maintain an interest section at the other's capital. Yesterday the Foreign Office said it remained undecided about whether it would allow a replacement for Mr Ajili.

Mr Ajili, known to belong to Iraq's Directorate General of Intelligence, arrived in August 1994. He was one of three Iraqis at the Jordanian embassy. The Iraqi staff needed special permission to travel out of London and, in the words of a security source yesterday, "We keep a close eye on their activities."

There is a substantial number of Iraqi exiles in London and Manchester. The exact number of dissidents who are prominent enough to be of interest to Baghdad is unknown but they include members of the exiled Iraqi National Congress and the Supreme Council for Islamic Resistance in Iraq.

West voices fears for Slovak democracy

ADRIAN BRIDGE

Central Europe Correspondent

The European Union and the United States yesterday took the unusual step of publicly sounding alarm bells about the state of democracy in Slovakia.

The ambassadors of four EU countries formally presented the Slovak Prime Minister, Vladimir Meciar, with a diplomatic note expressing concern.

The US embassy in Bratislava issued a statement also conveying President Bill Clinton's misgivings.

The warnings came after months of feuding between Mr Meciar and the Slovak President, Michal Kovac. They also followed recent allegations that the Prime Minister may have had a hand in the bizarre kidnapping two months ago of one of the President's sons.

Western officials said the statements only made public concerns expressed privately for some time. They strengthen the impression that Slovakia has fallen behind other Central European countries in the race to join Western institutions such as Nato and the EU.

In Slovakia, the statements will be seen as further evidence of what the government terms the "disinformation campaign"

aimed at "pushing Slovakia towards international isolation". The feud between the Prime Minister and President, one-time allies turned bitter rivals, has dominated Slovakia's political life since Mr Meciar returned to power following elections last September.

In addition to eroding the powers of the President, Mr Meciar has tried to persuade parliament to sack him, failing

to secure the three-fifths majority required to achieve it.

In August one of Mr Kovac's sons was kidnapped, dumped in the boot of his own car and driven to Austria, where he has been held ever since pending possible extradition to Germany on suspicion of fraud. The President believes the kidnapping was arranged by the Meciar-controlled Slovak Intelligence Service.

Housewives flex their muscles on world stage

Buenos Aires (Reuters) — Conservative housewives, tired of watching passively from behind their ironing boards as men and feminists monopolise public debate, plan to muscle onto the global stage with their first world congress.

Under the slogan "Housewives, Citizens of the World," women from 14 countries, including Russia, Italy, Britain, Germany, Japan and Brazil will attend a three-day forum in the Argentine capital, starting today. Several men from Spain will be among the 150 delegates.

"Feminists, lesbians and homosexuals are all occupying the stage, so why can't we?" said Lita de Lazzari, president of Argentina's League of Housewives. The recent United Nations World Conference on Women, in China, was an example of feminists grabbing

more than their fair share of limelight, she said, adding: "The only thing I say personally, not speaking for the League, is that the only thing feminists have done is to bring AIDS into the world, with free love and sexual liberty and all that."

Claiming 400,000 members and paying for its own daily cable television programme, Mrs de Lazzari's League is Argentina's top consumer rights organisation and packs a powerful political punch. While she said that housewives do not need to be paid for running the home, they do want respect as professionals, and more access to social security benefits.

But the main focus of the conference will be on family unity, because: "We have realised that taking women out of the home is what produces disasters," Mrs de Lazzari said.

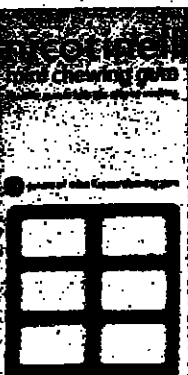
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سكوتات الامم

international



Train crash: Derailed carriages lying next to a bridge following a railway accident in which 19 people were killed and about 90 injured near the town of Tasikmalaya, western Java. The apparent cause of the accident was failure of the locomotive's brakes. Photograph: AFP

Cult guru's trick stalls trial

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Tokyo

The saga of the Aum Shinri Kyo religious sect took a confusing turn last night when the trial of the cult's guru, Shoko Asahara, was suddenly postponed after he dismissed his lawyer.

Mr Asahara had been due to appear in court for the first time this morning on three charges, including the murder of 11 commuters poisoned by sarin nerve gas on the Tokyo subway in March. Thousands were expected to queue for seats in the public gallery, and police in Tokyo were put on alert against any possible retaliation by the disciples of the guru.

But as the national evening news began a lengthy preview of the case, a startling announcement was made: Mr

Asahara's only lawyer, Shoji Yokoyama, had been sacked. Capital charges cannot be heard without a defender, so court officials had to put off the trial.

The move appears to be a delaying tactic on the part of Mr Asahara, who is charged with ordering several other murders and abductions, as well as the manufacture of illegal drugs and two separate sarin attacks.

Suspicions were raised on Sunday when Mr Yokoyama, 67, a seedy character reputed to have links with organised crime syndicates, was involved in a crash, in a car that was driven by a member of the cult. Despite apparently minor injuries he obtained a doctor's note ordering him to remain in hospital for two weeks, but was persuaded by court officials to appear for his defendant.

Yesterday, wearing a neck brace, he visited Mr Asahara in his cell at the National Police Agency headquarters, where he was dismissed. A second lawyer took on the case but resigned a few hours later.

The incident raises questions about the future course of the trial, the most complex in Japanese history. Assuming Mr Asahara is convicted, lawyers believe it could be at least 15 years before a death sentence is carried out, once a lengthy trial and appeals for clemency are taken into account.

In the absence of a lawyer, a defendant is assigned one by the state. The difficulty in Mr Asahara's case is persuading anyone to take him on. One of the cult's alleged victims was a lawyer, strangled and lethally injected with his wife and infant son.

Sumos' reputation goes up in a puff of smoke

Tokyo — It was a proud moment for sumo wrestlers, writes Richard Lloyd Parry. Earlier this month Takahashi, grand champion of Japan's national sport, travelled to Vienna to be made Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations in its fight against drugs. Three weeks later, his campaign is bogged down in embarrassment after accusations of cannabis use among his fellow wrestlers.

"Spiff-gate", as it may yet become known, was triggered by an article in *Shukan Gendai*, a weekly magazine, on the leisure-time activities of two junior wrestlers, Sunahama and Sentoryu.

Photos show them rolling then blissfully inhaling a cigarette. But more damaging was the text to the piece. "Marijuana? Never. Goodbye," was Sunahama's reply to *Shukan Gendai*'s phone call. Sentoryu, however, confirmed that he smoked the drug and so did his several of his bulky chums. The magazine stands by its report but both men have denied it and the Japan Sumo Association is threatening to sue for libel on their behalf.

The affair is complicated by the fact that neither is Japanese. Sentoryu, who is half Armenian, is the first ranking sumo wrestler from the mainland US. Sunahama, like several prominent sumos of recent years, is from Hawaii, where the two allegedly acquired their relaxing habit.

Debate has raged in conservative sumo circles over the suitability of foreigners participating in this quintessentially Japanese sport and the latest scandal will harm the prospects of others rising high, at least by conventional means.

Sydney enraged by Murdoch's film studio deal

ROBERT MILLIKEN
Sydney

Rupert Murdoch has become the centre of a political storm involving Australia's film and television industries over his plan to take over one of the country's largest studios in Sydney to build a new film studio.

Three months ago, it was announced that the deal was formally announced in July, it emerged that Fox Studios Australia would receive not just a portion of the showgrounds but almost the entire site for a peppercorn rent for 50 years.

With a general election pending next year, the controversy has also focused on the relationship between Mr Murdoch and Paul Keating, the Prime Minister, who has given his blessing to the enterprise.

The public land at the centre of the storm is the Sydney Showground, a 27-hectare site in central Sydney which has been the home of the Royal Agricultural Society since 1882.

For most of that time, the grounds have hosted the annual Royal Easter Show, at which farmers display the cream of their livestock and produce.

With the society planning to relocate the show on the site being developed for the 2000 Olympic Games, debate has raged over the future of the old showgrounds. They lie in the centre of parkland which Lachlan Macquarie, one of Australia's most visionary governors, dedicated in 1811 "for the benefit of all present and succeeding inhabitants of Sydney". In the 1990s, they also comprise some of Australia's most valuable real estate.

Film and television producers had lobbied the state government to convert some of the showground buildings for film production while turning the rest of the site into public parkland. After a meeting in Canberra with Mr Murdoch a year ago, Mr Keating took them by surprise when he announced that 20th Century Fox, the Hol-

lywood studio owned by Mr Murdoch's News Corporation, would build a studio there itself.

Technically, it is not Mr Keating's land to give: it is administered by the New South Wales state government, headed by Bob Carr, a Labor ally of Mr Keating who was left to sort out the details with Fox. When the deal was formally announced in July, it emerged that Fox Studios Australia would receive not just a portion of the showgrounds but almost the entire site for a peppercorn rent for 50 years.

where the government is a minority, demanding that Mr Carr's administration release all papers associated with the deal. Many Australian producers fear Mr Murdoch plans to use the studio to relocate American films away from Hollywood, where production costs have soared. An average feature film costs \$3m (\$2m) to produce in Australia compared to \$14m in Hollywood. Mr Murdoch hinted as much when he said recently: "Under the existing economics of film-making in Hollywood, there are too many films being made. We are not rushing into that area blindly."

As Mr Murdoch controls 70 per cent of Australia's newspapers, the deal has come under little press scrutiny. The rival *Sydney Morning Herald*, controlled by Conrad Black, has criticised it, describing Mr Murdoch as a "20th-century fox" and attacking the manner in which the state government suspended normal planning and environmental controls to rush through the scheme.

So, too, has Clover Moore, an independent MP who represents the showground district in the state parliament. She has referred the deal to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, a state body charged with investigating government actions and dealings.

"The government doesn't want us to know about their deal with Mr Murdoch," she said. "There has been no debate, half our people have been silenced and there is fear of speaking out against the intentions of a powerful media magnate."

Mr Keating appeared to demonstrate her point two weeks ago when Mr Murdoch rattled his government by describing the Australian economy as "disgrace".

Never one to mince words in the face of such an attack, Mr Keating was uncharacteristically benign in his response. "I think a few reactionaries were whispering in his ears," he said.

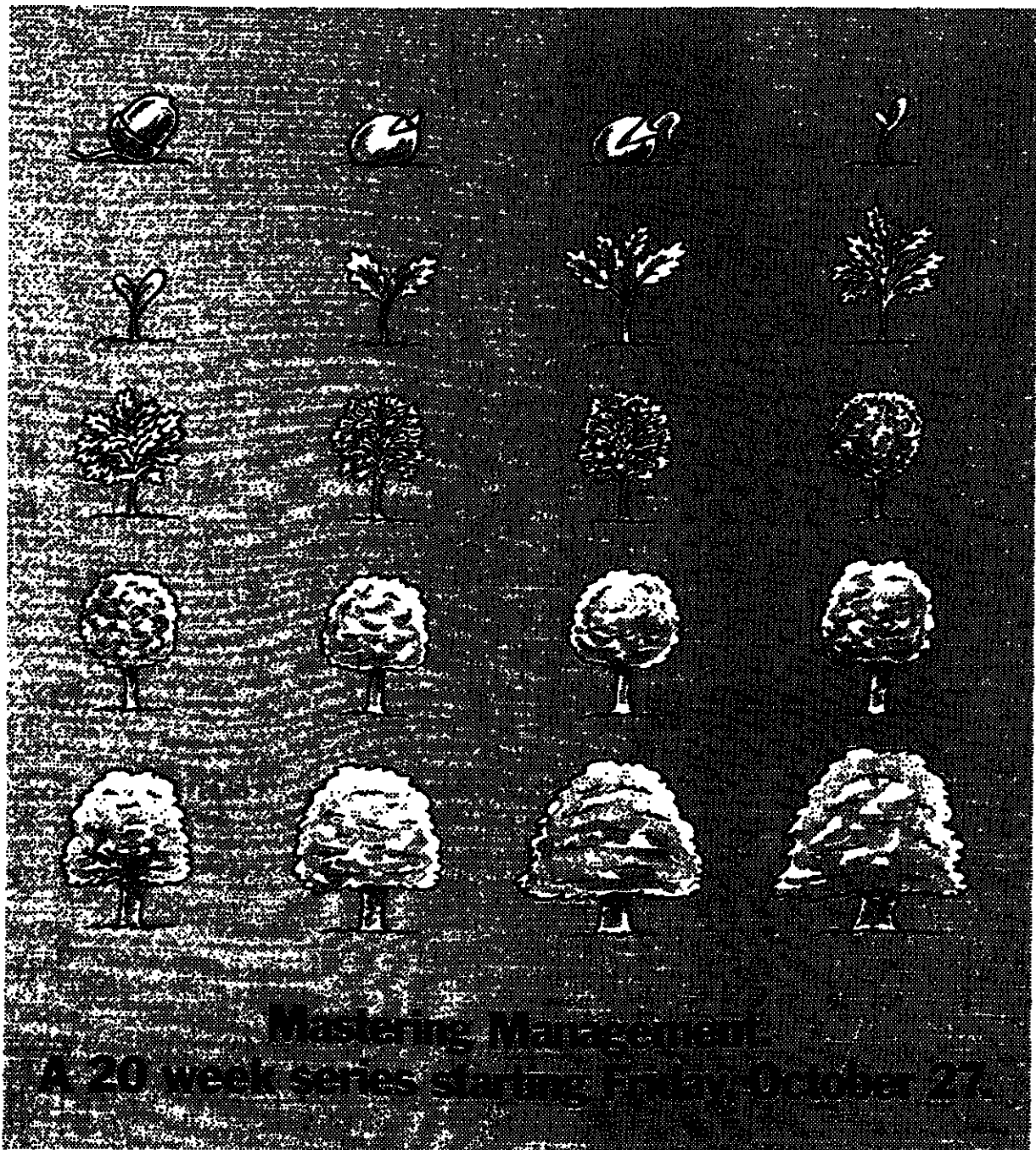
No FT, no comment.

On Friday, October 27 the Financial Times will publish the first part of Mastering Management

The course has been written by over fifty academics from three of the world's top business schools - London Business School, Wharton (US), and IMD (Switzerland). It comprises 19 modules ranging from Marketing to Business Ethics, Strategic Management to Organisational Behaviour and Leadership to Finance, all essential elements of a general management programme.

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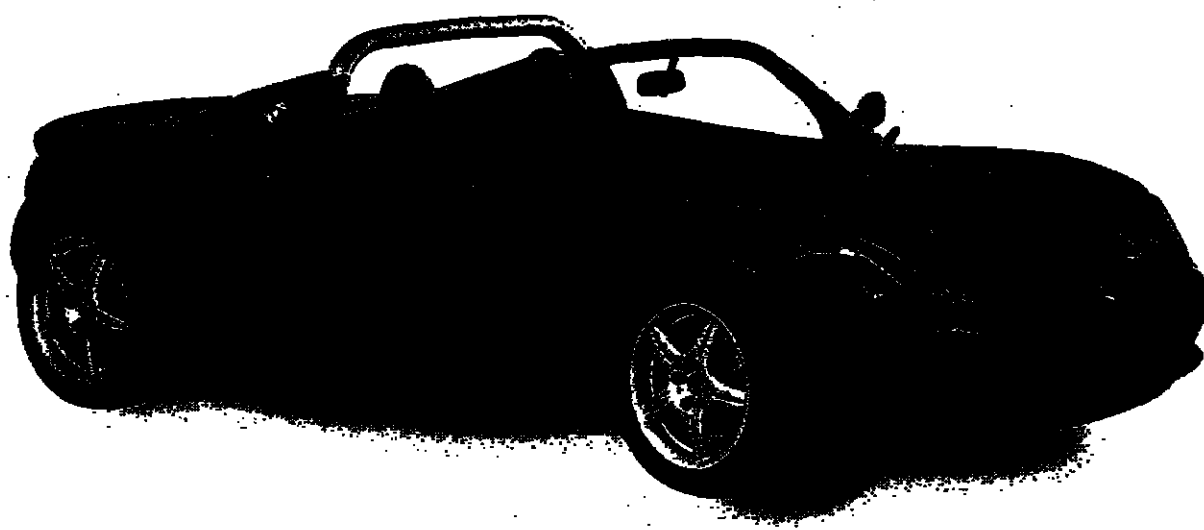


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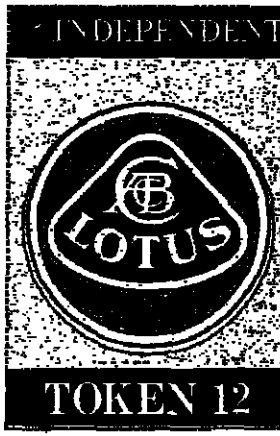
and thus carbon dioxide emissions.

The 1795cc 4-cylinder fuel-injected engine delivers a top speed of around 120mph and the Elise, worth approximately £20,000, comes with catalytic converter, engine immobiliser, cloth trim and black vinyl hood.

Lotus are exhibiting the Elise at this month's Motor Show at London's Earls Court. As well as receiving the keys to a Lotus Elise, our competition winner will also get one year's free insurance provided by Norwich Union Club Insurance. This service offers a 24-hour Clubline which, should you have an accident, connects you to a dedicated Club Incident Manager who will take immediate care of the problem.

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Turkey battles its enemy within

Tony Barber examines the hardline approach to the Kurdish insurgency

Diyarbakir — Unal Erkan, the governor of 10 provinces under emergency rule in south-eastern Turkey, spoke with a mixture of assurance and defiance as he defended his security forces against charges of abusing the human rights of local Kurds. "Look, it has happened that some policemen have made some mistakes," he said in an interview in his office at a barracks in Diyarbakir.

"Some terrorists were wounded, taken to hospital and not treated as well as they should have been. Once I heard about it, the policemen were removed from their jobs. About 15 of them, I would say."

A deplorable but untypical incident, he suggested, in a conflict which, according to official Turkish figures, has killed about 18,000 people since 1984, more than half of them rebels fighting for the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). However, by the admission of the Turkish authorities, more than 1,500 villages and hamlets in the south-east have been completely emptied of their inhabitants in an effort to starve the PKK, a Marxist group fighting for Kurdish autonomy or independence, of local support.

The effects are instantly visible in Diyarbakir, a city whose population, has shot up from 380,000 in 1990 to 1,500,000 today. The city streets are filled with jobless villagers.

No doubt the flow of hundreds of thousands of rural

Kurds into Diyarbakir, as into Istanbul, Ankara and other cities, partly reflects Turkey's rapid urbanisation, as well as the attempt of many villagers to escape PKK pressure. But it also reflects the fact that military and nationalist hard-liners dominate Turkey's approach to the Kurdish question, an approach which sees the answer in victory over the PKK rather than in the extension of political, cultural and educational rights to Kurds.

Mr Erkan, 53, a police commander, expressed confidence that the authorities were gradually bringing the Kurdish insurgency under control. "It would be right to predict a date by which it will be finished, but generally the problem is becoming smaller. Today is better than yesterday, and tomorrow will be better than today," he said.

Other sources in Diyarbakir who observe the authorities' cat-and-mouse battle against the PKK were more sceptical. One Turkish journalist said: "The fact is that the number of military sent here in the last two years has increased, and the authorities are using more sophisticated equipment. In that time the number of people killed has increased, and that is because PKK activities have increased."

Mr Erkan estimated that the PKK had a 6,000-strong force at its disposal, based partly inside Turkey and partly across the borders with Iraq and Syria. He declined to estimate the strength of the military and security



Moving in: A Kurd watches as the Turkish army pursues the PKK into Iraq

Photograph: Fatih Saribas/Reuters

forces ranged against them, but informed local sources said the army alone had at least 150,000 troops in the south-east.

It is a measure of the acute crisis in the region, and of the widespread fear of Turkey's strict anti-terrorism law, that businessmen, lawyers, lecturers and journalists in Diyarbakir were all hesitant to offer an opinion on the Kurdish question, at least without the protection of anonymity. Even to utter the word "Kurdish" seems

fraught with risk, as was illustrated when a professor at Diyarbakir University confessed that some of his students sometimes spoke, outside of class, "a language other than Turkish".

To support the PKK is to incur the full wrath of the Turkish state. According to a lawyer who said he had defended clients accused of links with the PKK, a prison sentence of up to six years can be imposed on a person who has given a PKK member money or even bread.

Active "terrorist activity" can be punished with 12 or 15 years in jail. Still harsher treatment awaits the three young men whose faces were displayed on a "Wanted" poster at Diyarbakir airport last week, next to accusations of "terrorist murder".

Liberal-minded academics and businessmen in Istanbul and Ankara pointed out that the heavier the state's repression of moderate Kurdish self-expression, the greater the risk that Kurdish loyalties would gravitate

to the PKK. But Turkey's Foreign Minister, Cöşkun Kirci, said the liberals and their Western supporters failed to understand how serious a threat Kurdish autonomy would pose to Turkey's stability and integrity.

"Turkey is a unitary state," Mr Kirci said. "The nation and republic are indivisible, as in France. Put it this way, France doesn't have enemies, Britain doesn't have enemies and Spain doesn't have enemies. But here we have enemies."

Peking steps up pressure in hunt for lama



Gendun: Six-year-old was chosen by the Dalai Lama

TERESA POOLE
Peking

The Chinese authorities have appointed hardline monks to run one of Tibet's most important monasteries and have formally purged the abbot who is in charge of Peking's search for the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama.

The appointments could be a prelude to the Chinese government staging a religious lottery ritual to endorse its own new Panchen Lama, the second most important figure in Tibetan Buddhism. And that could bring Peking into confrontation with the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader,

who in May named a six-year-old boy, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, as the reincarnated lama.

For five months the authorities have vilified the Dalai Lama, with scathing attacks in the media accusing him of flouting the traditional Tibetan procedures for discovering the reincarnation and of using the Panchen Lama search as part of a plot to "split China".

China so far has not rejected the little boy or come up with other candidates. Since May the boy and his parents have been detained, probably in Peking.

The acting abbot of Tashilhunpo monastery, Chodrel Rimpoche, who had been leading the official Chinese search

for the new Panchen Lama, has also been detained since May, although Peking maintains he is "receiving medical care".

Peking reportedly believes abbot Rimpoche informed the Dalai Lama that China was about to announce Gendun as the reincarnation, enabling the exiled leader to trump Peking.

According to the London-based Tibet Information Network (TIN), on 14 July abbot Rimpoche was removed as head of the Tashilhunpo Management Committee, the official search committee and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Peking's biggest problem is that if the government is to hold

its own divination ceremony, it needs senior lamas to sanction the religious procedures. But there has been a virtual revolt by senior Tibetan monks, who have refused to reject the Dalai Lama's announcement of the little boy. There have been 48 reported arrests by the Chinese since the dispute erupted.

Peking has now installed pro-Chinese Tibetans to run Tashilhunpo, the seat of the Panchen Lama, in Xigaze town.

According to TIN, the new acting head of the monastery is Sengchen Lobsang Gyaltsen, a bitter opponent of the previous Panchen Lama. Sengchen has publicly supported the Chinese government over the succession

to the Panchen Lama and has also attacked the Dalai Lama. Another monk appointed to the Tashilhunpo Management Committee is a hard-liner who is opposed to any co-operation with the Dalai Lama.

China says it has final say over senior lamas under a 1792 Qing Dynasty agreement, under which Dalai and Panchen lamas were approved by Peking. It says an 18th-century golden urn must be used for the "shaking of the Golden Vase", during which the names of candidates are hidden in balls. Rumours in Peking are that China plans to hold such a ceremony, and that Gendun's name will not be on the list of candidates.

US military loses legal privileges in Japan

Tokyo — The US government attempted to quell escalating protests against its military presence in Japan by effectively waiving legal privileges extended to servicemen suspected of rape and murder, writes Richard Lloyd Parry. The US ambassador to Tokyo, Walter Mondale, and Yoshi Kono, the Japanese Foreign Minister, announced the adjustment to the Status of Forces Agreement (Sofa), a bilateral accord which governs the treatment of servicemen suspected of crimes on Japanese soil. Under the wording of Sofa, military personnel wanted for questioning can remain in American custody until formally charged. The arrangement provoked outrage last month, after the rape of a 12-year-old schoolgirl on the island of Okinawa, where three-quarters of US bases in Japan are concentrated.

Airships may transport troops and tanks

London — US defence chiefs are considering using giant airships up to a quarter of a mile (450 meters) long to transport troops and tanks to trouble spots, *Jane's Defence Weekly* reports. The magazine said companies that have discussed airship designs with the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff include Lockheed Martin Skunk Works, best known for its secret work on reconnaissance and Stealth aircraft.

Giuliani stands by his ban on Arafat

New York — Despite criticism from the Clinton administration, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is standing by his decision to throw PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat out of a concert held for the United Nations' 50th anniversary. "I am comfortable with my decision and very proud of it," Giuliani said, blaming the PLO for the killings of US citizens.

Schoolgirl gets nine years for murder

Paris — A 14-year-old French girl was sentenced to nine years in prison in the eastern city of Nancy for murdering her classmate after a dispute over a ruler. The girl, named only as Leila, was found guilty of strangling classmate Sabrina, whose body was discovered in the lavatory of their school last March.

Roh urged to apologise for slush fund

Seoul — South Korea's ruling party chairman has urged former President Roh Tae-woo to apologise and go into internal exile following a slush fund scandal that sparked national outrage. Angered at the scandal involving tens of millions of dollars, civil organisations and students have staged protests against Mr Roh. His predecessor, Chun Doo-hwan, was forced to retreat to a Buddhist monastery after he left office and became embroiled in a financial scandal linked to his relatives.

King Hassan admitted to hospital

Rabat — Morocco's 68-year-old King Hassan (right) has been ordered to receive treatment in a New York hospital after suffering from influenza which turned into a respiratory infection. An official statement, issued from New York where the king is attending the UN's 50th anniversary celebrations, said: "His Majesty was ordered by his private doctors to receive treatment in a New York hospital after he suffered from influenza which turned into a sharp respiratory infection."



OAU tries to settle Zanzibar poll crisis

Zanzibar — Organisation of African Unity officials mediated between Zanzibar's two main political parties to try to resolve a post-election crisis. The OAU team, observers at last Sunday's first multi-party polls on the islands since 1964, were shuttling between the parties and the embattled electoral commission which has failed to announce the final result. Analysis of the partial results already released confirmed an almost 50-50 split between the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and the opposition Civic United Front (CUF). Some private Tanzanian media have already declared CUF's Seif Sharif Hamad the winner of the islands' presidency, ending the CCM's 31-year monopoly of power.

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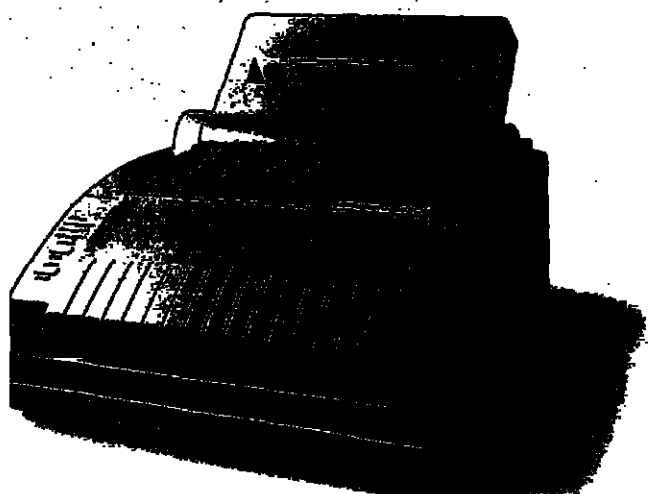


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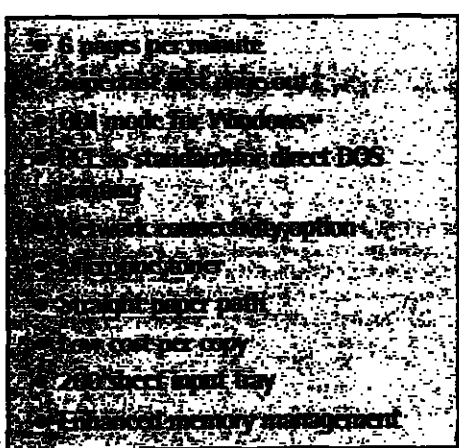
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صلى الله عليه وسلم

At present the heat seems to be going out of the European issue, making it most likely that Goldsmith's venture will be condemned to "interesting fringe party" status. But if the single European currency suddenly becomes more likely, or if new plans come up at next year's Inter-Governmental Conference, then Goldsmith's contacts and money could act as a catalyst for wider changes.

But Goldsmith's views have led him in a rather different direction. He funded the Euro-sceptic European Foundation, and at last year's Tory conference he joined Lord Rebbit and Bill Cash on the platform at the biggest and most heated Euro-sceptic fringe meeting. He sees the European Union as fatally attached to the principle of free

A high-contrast, black and white image showing a dense, textured surface, possibly a book cover or a wall, with a vertical line of light reflecting off the left edge. The texture is grainy and noisy, with many small white specks and lines against a dark background. The vertical line of light is on the left side, creating a strong contrast with the dark area. The overall appearance is that of a heavily textured, possibly metallic or stone, surface.

It was because countries did 1930s winner Professor Tim

I can't view sports any more needs for an elite Golds John Gray, F

Over the years observer of way in which candidate Goldsmith to Margaret Thatcher conference, priorities of

It's interestingly more

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Condon

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with approving on that point
allow of Jesus College, Oxford

I have become an experienced
analysis, the best indicator is the
the public approaches the
People were coming up to Jenny
just this way. It was like observing
tutor at a Conservative Party
of Ronald Reagan in the Republican
1980. Lord Peto-Moore

to see how our politics is going
American. Here is Sir James

His hostility to global free trade means he is in favour of a European free market surrounded by a tariff wall—which runs directly counter to most sceptics' desire to see Britain as the "Hong Kong of Europe" competing with the world. Sked, his rival as leader of the UK Independence Party, pours scorn on Goldsmith's claim to be a Euro-sceptic: "Goldsmith wants to see a 'Fortress Europe', a strengthened Europe, with powers simply transferred from the Commission to the Council of Ministers," he says.

Goldsmith's political views are, in fact, entirely unclassifiable in British terms. His emphasis on the damage done to the Third World by Western culture partly reflects ecological themes long advocated by his older brother, Teddy Goldsmith. And his advocacy of protection for a high-wage European economy finds stronger echoes in today's Labour Party than with the Tories.

At present the heat seems to be going out of the European issue, making it most likely that Goldsmith's venture will be condemned to "interesting fringe party" status. But if the single European currency suddenly becomes more likely, or if new plans come up at next year's Inter-Governmental Conference, then Goldsmith's contacts and money could act as a catalyst for wider changes.

response

UNDECEASED

Lord Tebbit

DAVID LISTER

Inevitably, AS Byatt tells me, *Darcy*, from *Pride and Prejudice*, with his smouldering passion, mysterious past, and bi-weekly television exposure, remains at the top position. The similarly smouldering Mr Rochester from Jane Eyre is not far behind.

In her own youth, she recalls, she was turned on by John Donne's "eroticism." My own small, unscientific survey of ABCI women shows smouldering is still in fashion with Rochester, Darcy and Heathcliff maintaining their pulling power. None of my respondents shared AS Byatt's cerebral lust for Donne. But a few, surprisingly, had a thing for Holden Caulfield, the tormented,

Paul Burger, chairman of Sony Music UK, is the new man in charge of the Brits pop music awards. For

But his voice remained as strong as it ever was right until the end. It must have been a strange sight: a dying man, physically destroyed, belting out 11 full-throated rock songs. The result is a moving and worthy legacy.

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ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Jeremy Reed

Prolonged, stormy race ahead

In the bad old days of the Soviet Communist Party, the transcripts of the interminable speeches made by the general secretary to the faithful used to amuse themselves by inserting audience reactions at regular intervals. Conventions dictated three levels of response: applause, stormy applause and prolonged stormy applause.

Had such a transcription been made of Michael Howard's address to a rather different conference this autumn, it would have noted the listeners' reactions to the Home Secretary's condemnation of racism as "applause". But his determination to crack down on illegal immigration? That rated "prolonged stormy applause". This, then, is the Conservative Party: a bit tough on racism, but far tougher on what it claims is the cause of racism - immigration itself.

It now seems inevitable that the Tories intend to make the question of immigration an election issue. For months now, "sources" from within the Government have been engaged in a most unusual exercise - briefing selected newspapers that a policy is not working. Month after month, stories have appeared drawing attention to the heightened cost and growing numbers of political asylum seekers, to the backlog of appeal cases, to the ineffectiveness of policing procedures. Each time these have been accompanied by hints as to what might appear in a new immigration Bill to be outlined in the Queen's Speech this autumn. Benefits will be cut for those on appeal against Home Office decisions, benefits will be reduced on entry, there will be no oral appeals, there will be an "audit of tyranny" establishing places where there is nothing to flee from - and so on. Howard the Scourge of Criminals now turns his avenging gaze on the immigration cheats.

How bad have things become? Apparently, the numbers of those seeking political asylum in Britain have climbed substantially this year. At the same time, the numbers of those seeking asylum in other European Union countries have dropped. QED: for once, those softies on the Continent have got it right while we - kind, liberal Britons - are a soft touch. The trend must be reversed, right?

Actually, the numbers are increasing from a low of just over 22,000 in 1993. Last year they had risen to 32,000. The current level might give a figure for 1995 of about 38,000 - all compared with a peak of 45,000 in 1990. In Germany the figures have indeed fallen - but to an annual rate of 150,000. In the Netherlands it was 52,000 in a country with less than a third of our population. So the tough Europeans are still processing many more would-be refugees than we are.

The estimated cost of welfare benefits to asylum seekers is £150m per year. But only a small proportion of this would be recouped by replacing such benefits with an "asylum-seekers' allowance". And there is no evidence whatsoever that such a cut would do anything to reduce the flow of those seeking asylum.

If the numbers are not great and the potential savings not enormous, why such investment of political capital in this area by the governing party? Because, as Mr Howard said last week, "my determination to improve race relations by firm immigration controls is at the centre of our approach". In other words, if people believed immigration was rising too fast, then racial tension might rise.

How odd that the Government seems so assiduously to have fostered exactly this perception. But then, Mr Howard has always had an ear for stormy, prolonged applause.

Work is a four-letter word

We are working more and more, to less and less effect. That is the underlying message of today's survey, carried out by a recruitment organisation, which shows that a quarter of white-collar workers put in more than 50 hours a week in the office. Few of them believe that either their careers or their work benefit, while almost everyone agrees that family life and personal relations suffer.

It is worth considering why this is happening and whether it can be stopped. At first sight the process seems to have an inexorable, lurching logic of its own, like the growth of peacocks' tails, or the spread of ever more sophisticated word-processing software with which to write simple memos. In both these cases, ever-greater resources are poured into some largely futile activity, not because the benefits of success are large or even noticeable, but because the penalty for falling behind competitors is terrible. If Trench in marketing can put in 50-hour weeks, then Snooks in the central administrative unit had better stick around for 55 hours - providing, of course, that their superiors work a 60-hour week and thus are available to notice this zeal.

And, for the most part, their bosses will notice. It is striking that the hours worked by white-collar workers now increase as these workers rise through the organisation. This is a complete contrast to the former *modus operandi* in most large firms, where the disagreeable work was done at the bottom and as much of it as possible was extorted from the workers.

On a global scale this still happens. But within Britain there is not so much of that kind of exploitation left.

The increasing globalisation and efficiency of the economy means that the jobs left in countries such as Britain are, for the most part, those which cannot be done by machines. The jobs that remain to be done by humans tend to demand flexibility of role and responsibility. Thus working hours are defined by the demands of the job and these can, in principle, be almost infinite.

There have always been some jobs like this, such as a priest's and an army officer's, but both these professions have tended to come with an assumption that a wife would submerge her own job entirely to her husband's profession. Anyone who has run their own business also knows that working time obliterates the social hinterland, although the effect on relationships and families is different where other members of the family form part of the working unit.

When both partners in a marriage have demanding professional jobs, the difficulties can be considerable, particularly with regard to childcare. Yet it is hard to see what can stop the spread of working hours. The answer, however, lies in the small print of the report. If it is true, as everyone involved seems to agree, that working as long as possible leads to the job being done worse, then the same demands for professional excellence as started this trend will tend to limit it. Soon, we hope.

ANOTHER VIEW Lord Mackay of Clashfern

A responsible divorce law

I should like to reaffirm my commitment and that of the Government to marriage. The Government wants to strengthen the institution of marriage - marriage is most important and valuable. I have recently assumed responsibility for funding marriage guidance. My department is now chairing a group set up to look at ways to support people preparing for marriage, as well as those who are already married and need help.

I consider that parties whose marriage is in difficulties should give very serious thought indeed as to whether the breakdown is indeed irretrievable and also look ahead to what the future holds beyond divorce. That is the purpose of the period for reflection and consideration which lies at the heart of my proposals for reform of the divorce law.

In this way, couples will face up to the responsibilities of marriage and the reality of divorce, unlike at present when there is every incentive to rush into a quick divorce, only to repent at leisure. There seems to be the assumption that in some way the presence of fault within the present system supports the institution of marriage and reduces the number of marriages which break down. That is plainly nonsense.

Fault within the present system is clearly not a restraining factor. Seventy-

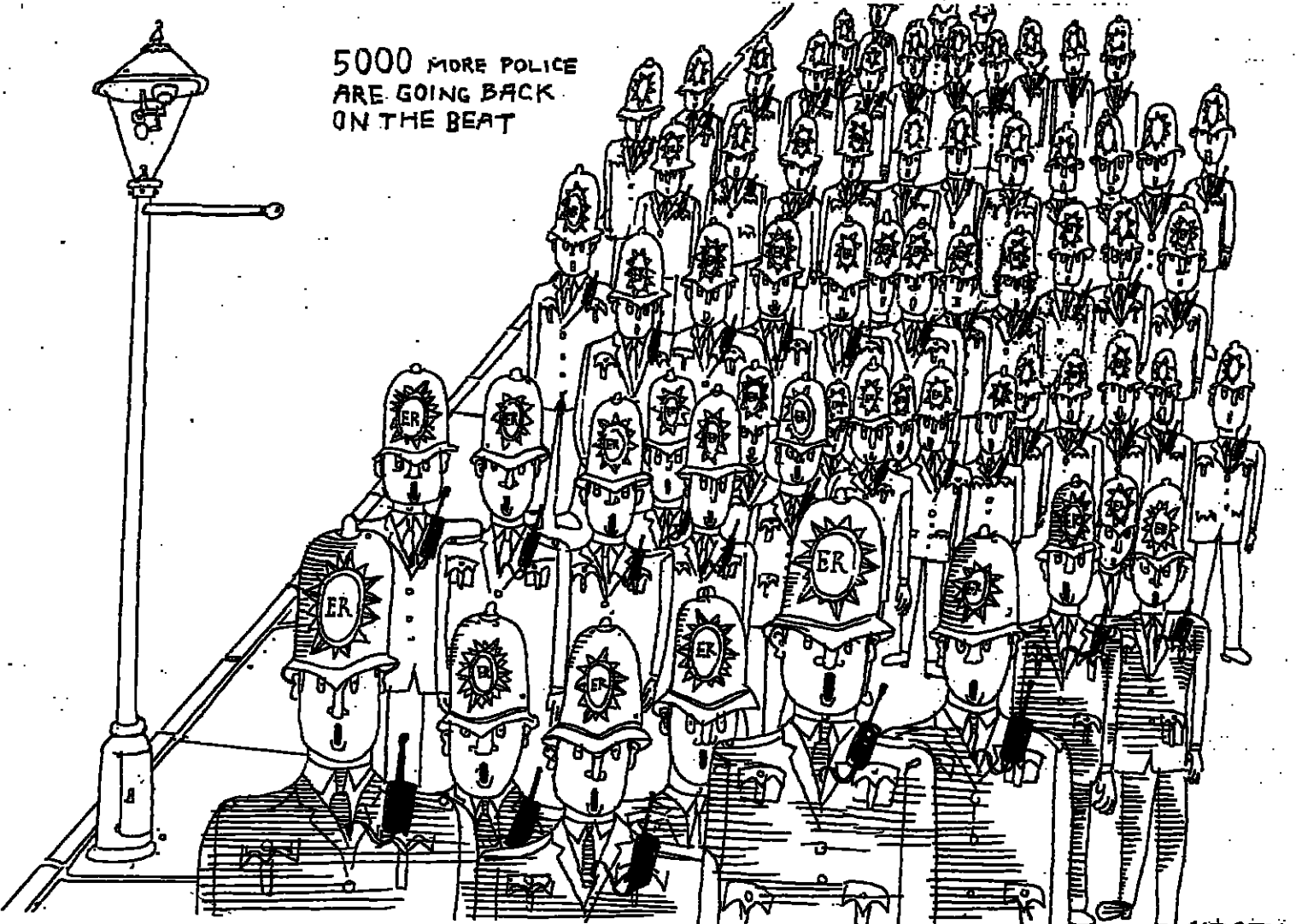
five per cent of divorces are based on fault, quite simply because fault offers the fastest route to divorce - that is the irony of the present system.

How can it be said that allegations made only for the purpose of a quick divorce are good for marriage when marriage is made up of human beings - the parties and their children? Allegations of fault lead to sterile and bitter conflict which only reinforces the determination of one or both parties to end the marriage and has a serious effect on the children.

The divorce system in this country can and should be better. Better for marriage; better for the children; better for the parties. The process for dissolution of marriage should be more considered and more responsible.

Marriage and family life is not just the responsibility of the state and of the law of the state. They are the responsibility of all of us. The Government is now playing its part. It is making a concerted effort to look at how best those preparing for marriage can be helped; how best those whose marriages are in difficulties can not only be supported but encouraged to seek help in good time; how best to ensure that only those marriages which are irretrievably broken down are dissolved.

The writer is the Lord Chancellor



'Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello! Hello!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Global tax for multinationals

From Mr Ronald Dore
Sir: Lord Desai (letter, 24 October) surely accepts the inevitability of our present-day international monetary system all too easily. Perhaps the removal of national capital controls was inevitable and irreversible, but does it have to be to unregulated markets that nation states surrender control?

What about the potential monitoring role of international organisations? Take those 200 global corporations. Everybody knows that they contrive to declare a good part of their profits not where they make them, but where they are least taxed. They can thus hold national states up to ransom. California tried taxing them on global, rather than local, profits, and came a bad cropper. Only a global taxing authority can tax globally.

Surely the 50th anniversary of

the UN is a time to start thinking about how that might be done. It's not beyond the wit of man to devise an international agency that taxes the major multinationals on their global earnings and divides the proceeds on some kind of where-the-value-was-added basis - with a 5 per cent cut for UN peace-keeping.

It may not be beyond the wit of man, but it is well beyond political acceptability to the US and its faithful allies. Is it not time the smaller states started thinking of building a counter-force? We didn't make progress in Britain until the barons started ganging up on King John and gave us Magna Carta. Yours etc, RONALD DORE, London School of Economics, London, WC2 4 October

The vision of the Crystal Palace

From Mr Owen Luder
Sir: The proposal to build a replica Crystal Palace would be a great mistake and a major misuse of lottery funds. However, this magnificent site has been neglected for far too long. What is required is a new, breathtaking, imaginative building that will echo in modern terms the vision and progressive technology of the original Crystal Palace.

Here is an opportunity for an international competition for a new building designed for modern needs that will be as outstanding an architectural landmark as Paxton's creation was in 1851.

We do not need a tired, unconvincing pastiche replica of a past era that cannot be resurrected. Let's celebrate the future at the millennium, not the past.

Yours sincerely, OWEN LUDER, President, Royal Institute of British Architects, London, W1 23 October

From Mr Ken Lewington
Sir: Further to your article of 18 October ("Crystal Palace may rise from the ashes", 18 October) and subsequent correspondence (21 October), it would seem appropriate to draw the attention of your readers to the following points:

If Sir Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace is rebuilt using Millennium Commission funds, it will be at one of the four shortlisted sites, ie Derby, Birmingham, Greenwich or Stratford - not at Sydenham.

Any building erected on the Sydenham site must, in accordance with the Bromley London Borough (Crystal Palace) Act 1990 reflect the architectural

style of the original Crystal Palace. Two earlier schemes (1989 and 1991) complied with this Act, but they were roundly condemned by the Royal Fine Art Commission and English Heritage as committing an "aesthetic crime" and making a "mockery" of the original. Lord St John of Plessley described the proposals as "a petty, scaled-down mimicry of some superficial Victorian".

Bromley has now submitted an outline application to the Heritage Lottery Fund prior to a full bid for £8-12m to re-landscape Crystal Palace Park. 2001 marks the 150th anniversary of the Great Exhibition - the vision of Prince Albert, Sir Henry Cole and Sir Joseph Paxton. Crystal Palace Park deserves not only the superb restoration project that has been proposed by Bromley, but also a building to stir the spirit, enrich the mind and transform the soul of south-east London as we enter the new millennium.

Yours faithfully, KEN LEWINGTON, Editor, Crystal Palace Triangle Community Association Newsletter, London, SE19 22 October

From Mr J. Michael Sharnan
Sir: In her article on the Crystal Palace (18 October), Marianne Macdonald describes it as "the first prefabricated building". My grandfather, Sir Edwin Airey, who designed and built Airey houses all over the country after the war, would never willingly allow them to be called "prefabs". "All houses are prefabricated," he would say. "It just depends on the size of the bits." How many bricks, for example, are actually made on the site of the building? Yours faithfully, J. MICHAEL SHARNAN, Rufforth, York 19 October

The Independent welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number. Please cite page reference and date for any articles mentioned. Letters may be fixed to 0171-293 2456, or sent by e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that we are unable to acknowledge letters.

Sting in the tale

From Mr Peter Donaghy
Sir: I read with interest your reference to the suggestion in court that Sting's A-level in economics should have helped him to have a better understanding of his financial documents ("Sting's adviser jailed for £6m theft from star", 18 October). As Gordon Sumner's former teacher of A-level economics, I would have willingly given evidence to the

Precipitate action on Pill

From Dr Brian G. Hands
Sir: I wish to express my disquiet about the way the Secretary of State for Health handled the withdrawal of the "dangerous" oral contraceptives.

There was no need to precipitate anxieties bordering on hysteria by asking women to present to their GPs in their current month's supply, thus suggesting that there was a degree of urgency. A large number of women have been on these pills for a considerable number of years and it would have been reasonable to advise them to see their GPs as their renewals became due. It is also debatable whether one should act on unpublished data.

On the other hand, there is a good deal of published data to suggest that older antidepressants have a dreadful incidence of fatality in overdose as compared with the newer. This is far greater than the increased thrombosis risk with any oral contraceptives but there has been no attempt to blacklist the dangerous older drugs. The cost of the newer drugs is about 10 times greater than that of the older.

As there has not been a similar move to ban the more dangerous cheap drugs, perhaps the cynics who call the oral contraceptive bans have a cost-saving element (about £25m) do have a point. Yours sincerely, BRIAN G. HANDS, Wellington, Derbyshire 23 October

From Dr Robert Donnelly
Sir: Your article covering the recent Committee on Safety of Medicines advice on certain combined oral contraceptives included a table of contraceptives ("Women still haunted by the risk factor", 20 October) which categorised products according to their safety yet failed to include Cilest.

The CSM advice was based on three new studies which indicate that combined oral contraceptives containing desogestrel and gestodene were associated with increased risk of thromboembolism compared to other progestogens. An annex page attached to the CSM advice lists the seven brands affected by this new information and states that "No change in prescribing practice is required for any other combined oral contraceptive". Since Cilest has not been shown to present an increased risk of thromboembolism it should be included as an unrestricted product in your tables.

Yours faithfully, ROBERT DONNELLY, Medical Director, Janssen-Cilag, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire 20 October

Put Hansard on the Internet

From Mr Horace Mitchell
Sir: The Campaign for Freedom of Information is right to lobby for Hansard to be available free of charge on the Internet and to challenge the Government's present stance that departments and agencies should aim to make money from the sale of public information ("Hansard" should be on Net", 17 October). Hansard's £11.70 a day is certainly a bit steep for finding out what our legislators are up to - especially when Hansard is created electronically before it goes into paper form. But there's a rationale even stronger than that of access and cost.

The United States takes a diametrically opposite line, requiring its equivalent of HMSO to make all government information available online at no more than a cost recovery charge (which for many purposes means free of charge). What is interesting is that the reason for doing this is not, as one might assume, to conform to freedom-of-information legisla-

tion, but in order to stimulate the use of Internet and related technologies. The US recognises that effective use of these methods is central to future economic and trade success.

As a result of this and other initiatives, over 25 per cent of US managers and professionals already use these networks and are accessible by electronic mail, compared with around 2 per cent of their UK counterparts. In addition, use of computer networks in the US is still accelerating faster than in the UK.

Some months ago Michael Heseltine promised us an Information Society Initiative. He would do well to start by unscrambling the present self-defeating approach of seeking to get money back from the taxpayer for information paid for from taxes in the first place.

Yours faithfully, HORACE MITCHELL, Chairman, Global Highways Business Group, Newbury 18 October

Child labour in Portugal

From Mr Rui Knopfli
Sir: I am writing with reference to your article on child labour in Portugal ("Portugal's children reap bitter harvest", 17 October). Of course, there is no denying the existence of child labour in Portugal. However, your article fails to convey a few important facts that could help to clarify the picture.

First, this kind of work is not a widespread phenomenon but occurs only in very specific areas of northern Portugal. And second, you do not refer to any measures already taken to combat the problem.

These include legislative measures, such as the "Time to Grow" campaign, the strengthening of labour inspection and increasing the years of compulsory schooling from six to nine, so that no one can work before the age of 16 without proof of having attended school. As a result of these and other measures, child labour has decreased substantially in last two years.

The efforts of the Portuguese government to combat the problem were recognised by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 7 June 1995 when it voted "with satisfaction the campaigns conducted against... child labour". Yours faithfully, RUI KNOPFLI, Press Counsellor, Portuguese Embassy, London, SW1

Freely given

From Mr John Wicks
Sir: The National Blood Authority says the only alternative to selling surplus blood products is to destroy them (20 October). Has the authority not considered that what has been gladly and freely donated could be given as freely to others?

I have no objection to my blood being used to help Turkish as well as British people. I have every objection to it being sold to them. Yours faithfully, JOHN WICKS, Reading 20 October

Lottery promotes wishful thinking

From Mr Robin P. M. Clarke
Sir: It is not only the "Churches [that] unite to attack 'damaging' lottery" (25 October) but also non-religious people such as myself. The most profound problems with the National Lottery are not only that it is a tax on stupidity, but that it promotes greed, selfishness and wishful thinking and undermines the motivating forces that lead to achievement. Add to these the problems of gambling, addiction and loss of charitable contributions, and the case for abolishing the lottery is unambiguous.

People have a right not to be pestered by instant delusion at every post office and supermarket. Those who want to gamble should do so in more discreet circumstances and not under the auspices of the state.

Yours sincerely, ROBIN P. M. CLARKE, Birmingham

From Dr A. R. Cadamy
Sir: Your editorial "No charity for lottery winners" (24 October) states that everyone can join in the argument about who receives lottery cash. It would be a simple matter for Camelot to give every body a democratic say in the distribution by adding a line of boxes for different categories of recipient: arts, medical, poverty and so on. These boxes would be filled in at the time the ticket is completed and counted on the same computer that registers the numbers. The proceeds would be distributed in proportion. How democratic could it get - taxation and representation.

Meanwhile, I continue to make sure that charities get 100 per cent of my contributions. Yours faithfully, A. R. CADAMY, Keighley, West Yorkshire

From Mr Len Salem
Sir: All this controversy over the distribution of National Lottery proceeds could easily be avoided (and much administrative expense saved) if the recipients were chosen by means of... a lottery. Yours faithfully, LEN SALEM, London, W5

Let's leave race out of immigration policy

Britain cannot be a global economic player by trading on racism. It's time for some honesty in this debate

Who are we? We are a youthful, open country, optimistically agape to the global economy, must-keen to grab the challenge of the Asian century. So the Prime Minister assures us. But at the same time we are an old, closed country, hostile to foreigners: so the Home Secretary reassures us.

We cannot be both. We cannot rat on our moral obligations to Indian and Chinese Hong-Kongers and be an influential, respected player in the developing Asian game. We cannot be a bubbling international entrepôt where cultures meet and the world does business, but which is also neurotically keen to keep out "darkies" and people with funny voices. It does not work.

But John Major, Michael Howard and their colleagues have breezily decided to ignore this disabling contradiction. A fortnight after Major's vision of Britain as the "enterprise centre for Europe", he is preparing for an asylum and immigration measure as the centrepiece of his new legislative package. What style. What breadth of vision. What an uplifting sense of priorities.

It is necessary, though. We need to protect ourselves against a tidal wave of liars and scoundrels, don't we? Well, there is indeed a staggering fact, made much of by the Home Office and certain Tory MPs: only 4 per cent of supplicants are granted asylum. That is right; four bleeding per cent, mate. So 96 per cent are scrounging, sneaky, pinko-darkey pyjama-trousered troublemakers. It's bleeding disgrace, innit?

Well no, actually. Only a couple of

years ago, about half of the people seeking asylum qualified or were given "exceptional leave to remain" here. Now, of the 60,000 to 70,000 people waiting (officials are endearingly vague about the exact number of "underpeople"), it is indeed true that 4 per cent will eventually be deemed to have qualified and 16 per cent granted exceptional leave to stay.

It is not that the character of asylum-seekers has suddenly and dramatically changed: it is that the rules were changed in the 1993 Immigration and Asylum Act. Ministers raised the hurdles. Now that fewer people clear them, this is presented as evidence of the bogus nature of asylum-seekers generally. Shabby stuff.

There are, of course, bogus asylum-seekers, economic migrants trying to better their lot. Home Office people insist that the new list of countries whose nationals will be treated suspiciously if they ask for asylum is partly aimed at Eastern Europe, particularly Poland. It will not include, as reported yesterday, such war-stricken or repressive countries as Algeria, Sri Lanka and Nigeria.

Now, it would be reasonable for British officials to tear up applications from people seeking asylum because of persecution by, say, the Danish authorities, or the government of Canada. And Poland is no longer a Whitehall "audit of repression" being used to exclude whole classes of applicants is a dangerous one. There are countries whose governments the Foreign Office does not want to offend, but where fear of persecution is real. Once you start to include geopolitics



ANDREW MARR
Columnist of the Year

in the rule book, individuals will be denied justice.

Furthermore, those utterly bizarre examples of "safe" countries came from somewhere. Perhaps there is a surrealist saboteur on the loose in Whitehall. Maybe Mr Howard is simply the victim of a cruel practical joke - as Michael Portillo clearly was, when his statesmanlike party conference speech was tampered with by some malign satirist at the last moment (and tragically, of course, the joke version was the one he delivered).

What is not a joke, or at all obscure, is the broad thrust of the coming legislation. The Home Office is fighting for private employers to be obliged to investigate the immigration status of job applicants, even though other ministers have warned of the possible racist consequences. Asylum-seekers awaiting judgement are to lose their social security benefits, cutting off their means of support - a fine act of British generosity, that. Perhaps a DSS pamphlet on *Begging techniques and street regulations in the United Kingdom* will be offered gratis to all such incomers?

What is interesting about the explanations of these proposals, as they

dribble out, is that the Government still feels it necessary to produce any mimicry of rationality or legalism for measures whose purpose seems all too clear - to keep dark-skinned foreigners out.

Why bother to hide it? The British have long been hypocritical about race, thinking of ourselves as tolerant, put-upon people who keep ourselves to ourselves but who, for some inexplicable reason, now find foreigners wandering about our streets. Never mind that, earlier this century, we were populating Australia, chunks of Africa, America, the Caribbean, India. Never mind that our own racial migrations have changed the world dramatically, far more so than anything that will happen to Britain in the next century. We cling to our cosy self-image.

This hypocrisy is particularly dangerous today because of the re-emergence of race as a hot topic in the Anglo-American world. After 50 years of decent silence, the wet-lipped academics with measuring tapes and selective statistics are back. More popularly, the condition of black Americans and the reappraisal of their civil rights optimism is echoing here. The OJ Simpson debate spilled across British pubs and kitchen tables, too.

Ministers may affect to be uninfluenced, either way, by any of this wider climate. Mr Howard is, it seems, offended by the suggestion that he is dabbling in dirty waters. Has he not spoken out against racism in his recent party speeches? Is he not a civilised man, Jewish to boot? Does he not attend, with meticulous attention, many meetings with British Muslims, Hindus and other minorities?

Yes he does. But he is also a sophisticated politician who knows how messages come over. He parrots the oh-so-convenient thought that racial harmony equals tough immigration control. And controls are certainly part of the story. But when it is implied that they are almost the whole story, black and liberal Britons should pause and stare. The politically correct words from the front of the mouth are all too easily drowned out by the hissed message from the side of the mouth.

What we need instead is an honest speech or two about immigration and race, followed by an honest policy, with nothing left covert. If Howard is playing fair, he owes it to us to say how many immigrants he thinks this country can absorb every few years, and why, and who they should be. Other countries make a virtue of wanting particular classes of skill and of paying particular attention to certain overseas groups. We should, too.

This is indeed about our national destiny: if we really want to be a country that exploits the openness and dynamism of the global economy, it is downright odd to start by rebarreling behind a new wall of Home Office regulations aimed at displaced foreigners. It is a question of attitude. We cannot get away, as we once did, with seeing abroad as a place to be exploited, then shunned.

Yet this contradiction has thus far been ignored by the Conservative Party. It blithely says, with Walt Whitman, "Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself. (I am large, I contain multitudes)." Only in this case, it isn't, and it doesn't.

Going through a tricky phrase

Have you noticed that news programmes are now so sophisticated that all interviews are exactly the same? In other words, they are all boring no-score draws? It stands to reason, really. When you have a professional interviewer talking a professional spokesman or politician, no one is going to give away a goal.

So, to while away the tedium of these otherwise useless encounters, I have devised a new game to play during Today or Newsnight or wherever interviewer is pitted against apologist. All you have to do is take the following list in hand and tick a phrase every time you hear it used by the person being interviewed. The more phrases you tick you better you score.

"We have always welcomed criticism."
"We have nothing to be afraid of in the way of criticism."
"We have nothing to hide."

"There are always improvements to be made."
"Yes, I think we have got to be more focused in this area."
"Yes, I think we have got to be more responsive."

"Mistakes have been made. Of course they have."
"But mistakes have always been made. It is not the fault of the system. It is down to human nature."

"I couldn't possibly comment on an individual case."

"I haven't had a chance to read the report yet, so I couldn't possibly make a comment on that."

"What I would like to know is, who leaked the document to the Guardian in the first place? That is what we should be asking ourselves."

"There will always be problems of adjustment when you are instituting change, but the benefits will be very real when the throughput is on stream."
"We have always been customer-led."

"We have always been customer-driven."
"It is all a matter of interpretation."

"Ah, but that applies only to reported crime."

"That is very selective quoting from a leaked document."
"That is very selective quoting from a leaked discussion document."

"That is very selective quoting from a leaked discussion document which I have not yet had a chance to see."
"That is very selective quoting from a leaked discussion document which I have not yet had a chance to see in this morning's Guardian."

"I would like to comment on that, but as you know it is still sub judice."
"If there is any truth in what

you are saying, then the proper course of action is to hold an inquiry."

"I think it would be quite improper of me to comment on that while the inquiry is still taking place."

"As you know, the inquiry is due to report very soon, and that will be the correct time to respond to your questions."

"I feel sure you will understand when I say that I have not yet had time to digest what the report says."

"I have now had time to digest what the report says and I agree with it when it says that it is too late now to apportion blame."

"We must learn from our mistakes."
"We must all learn from our mistakes."

"It is time to put old differences aside and forge a common strategy."

"As far as it from me to make a party political point, but ..."

"I couldn't agree with you



MILES KINGSTON

more. All I would say is this ..."

"Ah, yes, but you are concentrating on one small area."

"The report was at pains to point out that the overall picture is healthy."

"The year you quote happened to be an unfortunate and quite atypical one."

"We are not complacent."
"We have never been complacent."

"Things look very different on the shop floor, I can tell you."

"No, I don't accept that."
"That is not a picture I recognise."

"Oh, come on - if Michael Howard refuses to admit responsibility for anything, you surely don't expect me to do so?"

Get the idea?

You get a point for every line you hear and tick.

You get five points every time you hear the same line twice.

You get 100 points every time you get to the end of an interview.

You get 1,000 points every time you listen right to the end of an interview and the clichés come so thick and fast that you still have no idea what it was about - crime, education, child abuse, lorry pollution, soccer violence or whatever.

Good luck!

the Internet

A government defeat today may let Berlusconi back for a decisive showdown, says Andrew Gumbel

Can Italy survive Dini's fall?

If Lamberto Dini's government falls in today's parliamentary no-confidence vote, it will spark far more than just another Italian political crisis. This time, it spells serious trouble. Three years after the collapse of the old political order under a sea of corruption scandals, Italy is further than ever from creating the healthy new democracy it had hoped for.

As a non-political premier, Mr Dini was supposed to have been the man to dig Italy out of the last hole it fell into following the resignation of his predecessor, Silvio Berlusconi. But now, buffeted by inter-party rivalries in the country's hopelessly divided parliament, he looks likely to fall victim to the same process of political meltdown that led to his appointment in the first place.

The timing could not have been worse, since the 1996 budget - crucial to keeping Italy's runaway public



Berlusconi (left): still ambitious. Dini (right): no headway

Photographs: Reuters

The debate risks poisoning the very foundations of democracy

deficit in check - lies undebated by parliament and if the government falls, risks being scuppered altogether. That, in turn, is likely to send the lira and Italy's stock and bond markets into a tailspin and put the country's future in the mainstream of European nations into serious question.

But, even more seriously, the catalyst for today's no-confidence vote - the dismissal of Filippo Mancuso, Mr Dini's controversial justice minister - has sparked a furious debate about the impartiality of the judiciary and the high institutions of the state, which in turn risks poisoning the very foundations of Italian democracy.

It has been an extraordinary debate. Mr Mancuso, an unelected and unpopular jurist, has used his office to launch a full-frontal attack on the Milan magistrates - who single-handedly brought down the old political order with their anti-corruption investigations, and who are generally regarded by public opinion as heroes.

Over the spring and summer, Mr Mancuso launched wave after wave of inspections on the Milan team. There may have been some substance to his suspicions - after all, it would be astonishing if a handful of investigating magistrates could bring a whole political generation to book without breaking a few rules. But Mr Mancuso did

not relent even when his own inspectors failed to find evidence of wrongdoing. Instead, he accused everyone from the president down of conspiring in a cover-up, and described Mr Dini as "servile" for refusing to stand by him.

Mr Mancuso became a liability to the government and, at the urging of the centre-left, was removed following a no-confidence vote in the Senate last week. But by then he had become more than just a wayward minister waging a one-man vendetta; he had become the perfect foil for Mr Berlusconi, who has his own fight to wage against the judiciary, since he is about to go on trial for irregularities in his company's tax accounts.

Indeed, the struggle to get rid of Mr Dini makes no sense without looking at Mr Berlusconi's motivation and what he represents. When he swept into politics and into power in the first three months of 1994, he presented himself as a champion of the anti-corruption drive that had felled the old generation of politicians, and the standard-bearer of a new, clean politics in which he would treat Italy as a giant

corporation and apply his entrepreneurial talents to running the country.

In fact, though, Mr Berlusconi's whole political and business culture was steeped in the old system. He owed his near-monopolistic control of private television to his old friend, the former Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi, who was at the epicentre of the anti-corruption investigations. As his premiership progressed, it became clear he was not a revolutionary, but rather the vanguard of a counter-revolution. Instead of completing the clean-up of public life, he did all he could to bring it to a halt. Far from encouraging the anti-corruption drive being conducted by the Milan magistrature, his government first tried to call a general amnesty and then launched inspections in an attempt to discredit the magistrates' work.

Mr Berlusconi's premiership was stopped in its tracks when he himself came under investigation for corruption and his fractions coalition collapsed last December. But his ambitions remain intact. Lord Dainoffo recently likened him to the new breed of political leader prevalent in South-

east Asia, who preach economic liberalism at the expense of democratic freedoms. Indeed, Mr Berlusconi has often looked like a man irritated by the niceties of parliamentary democracy. He has treated the judiciary - from individual magistrates right up to the supreme judicial authority, President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro - with a disdain that has gone beyond personal animosity and bordered on hostility towards the institutions of the law themselves. Revealingly, he recently described the ongoing trial of Giulio Andreotti, the former prime minister, as a blot on the image of Italian goods in the export market, as though justice were some kind of customs tariff that, in an ideal free-trade world, would not need to exist at all.

As a direct result of Mr Berlusconi's attitude, the role of the judiciary has been thrust into the centre of political debate. As well as applauding Mr Mancuso, Mr Berlusconi's allies have launched attacks on the Milan magistrates, accusing them of mounting political witch-hunts and serving the interests of the political left. The left, meanwhile, has sought to capitalise on

the popularity of the magistrates to discredit Mr Berlusconi, and indeed has made great efforts to woo Antonio Di Pietro, the most prominent of the magistrates, who resigned mysteriously last year and now harbours ambitions to enter politics.

Mr Dini has had the near-impossible task of keeping the country on track and trying to ignore mounting political passions. His mandate was tough enough as it was: to prevent the country's dangerously high public debt from spiralling out of control, and to prepare the ground as possible for fresh elections that would end the political instability once and for all.

Mr Dini has made some progress on the first point, cutting the budget deficit for the first time ever, in a supplementary financial package for 1995, and beginning the huge task of reforming the inefficient and debt-laden pensions system. But on the second point

The magistrates have been accused of mounting political witch-hunts

he has made no headway at all. The electoral system that failed to deliver a decisive majority to Mr Berlusconi in March 1994 has not been touched. Attempts to address the massive propaganda power of Mr Berlusconi's three private television networks have been fragmentary and unsuccessful.

This is not exactly Mr Dini's fault. He has been faced with a seemingly unbreakable paradox: that the cause of the political instability, a divided parliament, has also been the main obstacle to doing anything about it. Mr Berlusconi and his allies don't want him to be able to change the rules; they want to get back into power and change them themselves. To do so, they will have to convince the electorate that they are right about the justice system. How else can Mr Berlusconi explain away the fact that he is due to stand trial in January? The people will have to decide if he is the victim of a witch-hunt, a true reformer frustrated by low conviction on the part of the judiciary and his political adversaries, or just a regular bad guy trying to discredit the judiciary to further his own ambitions. It is a debate whose price may be the political and economic stability of the whole country.

Hamish McRae is away.

Generation Why



by Tony Reeve and Steve Way

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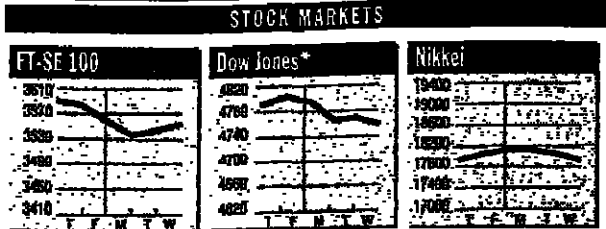
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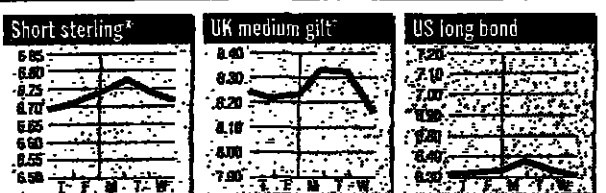
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	12 Mth High	12 Mth Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	3537.8	+2.5	+0.1	3593.0	2943.4	4.0
FTSE 250	3265.4	+1.6	+0.0	3291.3	3300.5	3.5
FTSE 350	1765.4	+1.1	+0.1	1785.3	1477.0	3.9
FT All-Share	1958.2	+0.7	+0.0	1983.1	1678.6	3.3
FT All-Share	1739.4	+1.1	+0.1	1762.8	1485.2	3.8
New York	4753.7	-30.0	-0.6	4814.7	3674.6	2.4
Tokyo	17970.8	-43.4	-0.2	19988.6	14485.4	0.8
Hong Kong	9841.1	+65.4	+0.7	10032.9	6967.9	3.2
Frankfurt	2150.1	+36.5	+1.7	2317.0	1811.0	2.0
Paris	1764.1	+39.9	+2.3	2017.3	1721.1	3.8
Milan	9090.0	+39.0	+0.4	10911.0	8912.0	2.2

*New Jones at 1000 hours. New Jones graph at 1430 hours

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

FTSE 350 companies (including investment trusts)				Falls				
Rises	Price(p)	Change(p)	%Change		Price(p)	Change(p)	%Change	
First Leisure	346	18	5.5		British Gas	236.5	11	4.4
Woolston	396	20	5.3		Rolls-Royce	155.5	5.5	3.4
MI Laboratories	325	16	5.2		Darke Bus Sys	556	19	3.3
Meyer Int	356	15	4.4		Intalgar House	22	0.75	3.3
Wilson (Connolly)	146	5	3.5		Barntunnel Units	93	3	3.1

INTEREST RATES

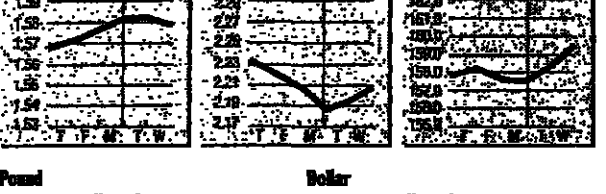


Money Market Rates

Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Rate (5)	Year Ago	Long Bond	5 Year Ago
UK	6.51	6.72	8.22	8.86	8.38	8.89
US	5.78	5.78	6.01	7.87	6.33	8.05
Japan	0.41	0.75	2.89	4.66	3.82	5.00
Germany	4.06	4.06	6.54	7.92	7.21	8.02

*Benchmark indices

CURRENCIES



Percent

Yesterday's Change	Year Ago	Yesterday's Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5795	-0.176	1.6367
\$ (New York)	1.5795	+0.05c	1.6331
DM (London)	2.2031	+1.05p	2.4419
DM (New York)	158.85	+1.55	158.53
£ Index	83.7	+0.1	89.5

*New York rates at 1000 hours

OTHER INDICATORS

	respon	may's chg	year ago		index	latest	yr ago	next figs
Oil Brent \$	16.03	-\$0.02	16.74	RPI	150.8	3.9pc	2.4	16 Nov
Gold \$	382.75	+\$0.25	389.40	GDP	106.8	2.4pc	4.1	20 Nov
Gold £	242.32	+0.42	237.92	Base Rates	—	6.75pc	5.25	—

Source: Datastream

IN BRIEF

'Independent' writer honoured

Derek Pain, the *Independent's* stock market reporter, was named yesterday as stock market writer of the year, winning the coveted Incheape Falshaw award presented by Sir David Plowman, chairman of Incheape. The judges were Peter Meinertzhagen (ABN Amro Hoare Govett), Brian Waterford (Winterflood Securities), David Rough (Legal & General), Nick Verrey (SBC Warburg) and Philip Yea (Guinness). Sir David was chairman of the judging panel.

Derek Pain's report, page 27

Channel 5 decision day

The Independent Television Commission is to announce tomorrow the winner of the Channel 5 licence, following days of speculation. The four bidders are UKTV, a consortium led by Canadian broadcaster CanWest; Channel 5 Broadcasting, sponsored by Pearson, MAI and others; Virgin TV, made up of Richard Branson's Virgin Group, Associated Newspapers and others; and New Century Television, a joint venture led by BSkyB, the satellite and cable broadcaster which is 40 per cent owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation.

Profits rise for SmithKline

SmithKline Beecham, chaired by Sir Peter Walters (below), announced a 9 per cent increase in third quarter pre-tax profits to £310m bringing the nine-month total to £1.48bn, a 59 per cent increase. Sales from continuing operations rose 16 per cent as new products continued to make up for declining turnover from ulcer treatment Tagamet. Jan Leach, chief executive, said the quarter's biggest achievement was the launch of an over-the-counter version of Tagamet to treat heartburn. SIB's shares closed 9p higher at 673p.



Cable channel for Scotland

Scottish Television is to launch a cable channel north of the border, the company announced yesterday. The chairman, Gus Macdonald, said that ITV companies should look more closely at prospects in the cable industry, where he said that there was scope for secondary market deals involving ITV and the new media. He also confirmed that Scottish and its 16 per cent owner Mirror TV were in talks that could lead to a Glasgow-based version of Mirror's LiveTV cable channel.

Trust under shareholder pressure

Disgruntled shareholders in the Throgmorton Preferred Income Trust have asked the trust's managers not to make any further investments, following what they consider to be the poor performance since its launch nearly two years ago. The shareholders have requisitioned an extraordinary general meeting at which they intend to call for the resignation of the current directors.

Jobs to go at Northern Foods

Northern Foods is to close its dairies in Hull and Middlesbrough next year with the loss of 322 jobs. It is also selling its Cotswold Bay dairy and six distribution depots in Wales.

Lottery cash gives Clarke tax-cut scope

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

Proceeds from the National Lottery will make it easier for Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to cut taxes in his Budget at the end of next month.

The shortfall in the Government's finances would have been about £1bn higher during the past year without revenues from the lottery. Their contribution, improving the published borrowing total, comes at a time of heated debate about whether big tax cuts can be justified given the disappointing state of the public finances.

However, the Chancellor could draw some comfort from the success of yesterday's gilts auction. The £3bn worth of long-term government stocks on offer attracted bids of nearly £6bn. This was better than analysts had expected, and came as a relief to the authorities. Investors' concerns about the scale of public borrowing had led to an unprecedented shortage of bids for the gilts on auction last month.

Public sector borrowing has been so much higher than the Government's projections that the Bank of England might need to hold extra auctions on top of the three already scheduled for the remainder of this financial year. The borrowing needs would have been greater still without lottery revenues.

The delay between payments by Camelot into the lottery distribution fund and disbursements by the fund to good causes has temporarily reduced the public sector borrowing requirement. The timing of the dip could be crucial for this year's discussions about the Budget.

Camelot pays 28 per cent of the lottery revenues to the distribution fund, which are counted as part of central government revenues. The fund is obliged to disburse - eventually - almost all of this total to good causes through bodies such as the Millennium Fund and Charities Board. This counts as government expenditure.

Since last November lottery proceeds have added nearly £1bn to government revenues, £700m of which has fallen into the current financial year. About £50m has been paid out so far, and it will take another year before spending starts to catch up with revenues.

Mr Clarke has adjusted the definition of spending that the Government will target to exclude these lottery disbursements. However, there has been no corresponding adjustment to the definition of government revenue.

The lottery figures are included in the "other" category in official statistics, along with numerous other miscellaneous categories. David Mackie, an economist at IIP Morgan who identified the lottery effect, said: "The true

fiscal position this year is actually worse than it appears at first blush, due to the technical operation of the National Lottery." The Government's woes were worse than most people thought, he said.

Despite the help from lottery revenues the PSBR has been disappointingly high this year. Borrowing has amounted to £20.4bn since April, higher than at the same stage last year. Without the lottery money it would have been about £21.3bn. The Government's summer target for the PSBR for the full year was £23.6bn.

Cable complaints: Regulator insists on end to special distribution arrangement

OFT blocks exclusive Disney deal with BSkyB

MATTHEW HORSMAN

The Office of Fair Trading has shot down an exclusive distribution arrangement between Disney and BSkyB, the cable and satellite channel.

Acting on complaints from cable operators, the OFT has insisted that the Disney Channel, currently only available to cable subscribers who also take BSkyB's two premium movie channels, must be offered on a "non-exclusive" basis.

In letters to the operators, the OFT said the terms of the existing Disney/BSkyB agreement "had been altered" to pre-empt the bundling of channels offered to cable companies. Satellite subscribers, however, will continue to receive the Disney Channel only if they subscribe to the two Sky Movie services.

An OFT spokesman added that BSkyB would be writing to the cable companies to detail the new arrangements.

As a result of the OFT action, cable companies will now be able to deal directly with Disney over the terms of supply, rather than through BSkyB, 40 per cent owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation.

But cable operators were circumspect yesterday about the effects of the OFT's intervention, pointing out that Disney could now charge even more for the Disney Channel than the operators currently pay for the "bundle" on offer from BSkyB. The result could be that cable operators in fact choose to retain the current arrangements.

"It's great that the OFT has acted on this issue," said one cable executive. "But how do we know what Disney is going to charge us?"

Disney executives were scheduled to meet cable operators next week to discuss the

new terms of supply. The company would be free to negotiate a higher price than that offered to BSkyB for its exclusive supply.

The OFT intervention may affect other terms of BSkyB's contractual arrangements with Disney, which were the result of a high-profile and protracted negotiation giving the UK satellite broadcaster exclusive rights. Neither Disney nor BSkyB were available for comment last night.

The Disney Channel is viewed by the pay-TV industry as potentially one of the sector's most profitable additions since the launch of satellite services. It features a mix of cartoons, films and other programmes deemed suitable for the "family viewing" market.

Moreover, Disney has huge brand recognition, with its stable of globally known characters such as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and, more recently, Aladdin and Pocahontas.

BSkyB has been accused in the past of abusing its dominant position in the pay-TV market in the UK. Cable operators complain that the company's deep pockets, long-term supply arrangements with Hollywood and its control of "conditional access" technology used to encrypt video signals for pay-TV combined to make BSkyB invulnerable to competition.

Cable industry executives also complain that programme suppliers often ignore cable channels altogether, preferring to deal directly with the dominant player. This has been the case, they argue, with sports programming, where BSkyB dominates professional football through its exclusive deal with the Premier League.

BSkyB's position in the pay-TV market has been the subject



Communication key: Cable companies will henceforth be able to deal directly with Disney for the right to broadcast its material, including the film 'Pocahontas'

of several OFT rulings. Last March, the company agreed to offer its channels to the cable industry on an *à la carte* basis, and received approval for a revised rate card in August.

Under its terms, cable com-

panies can buy Sky channels at a discounted rate to the price charged satellite subscribers, for onward transmission to their own customers.

Subsequently, agreements between BSkyB and Telewest

and Nynex CableComms, the two largest UK cable operators, were deemed to be "significantly anti-competitive", and the OFT demanded that changes be made. It has yet to approve the revised contracts.

MPs' City inquiry 'falls short'

NIC CICUTTI
and DAVID HELLIER

A year-long inquiry by MPs into the City's leading financial watchdogs, including the Stock Exchange and the Securities and Investments Board, looks set to cause uproar among those who want the City reformed.

Details beginning to emerge ahead of the report's publication next week, indicate that the majority of MPs on the Commons Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee want the City left largely unchanged.

Members of the committee are believed to have rejected proposals to bring all self-regulatory bodies under a sin-

gle government-controlled body. There is already a row between Tory and Labour members - a Labour proposal for an immediate overhaul was voted down earlier this week.

One member said the report, finally agreed on Monday, would be "disappointing". Some members are believed to be preparing an addendum to the main report that more closely reflects their views. The select committee inquiry into the regulatory system follows a succession of financial scandals that have rocked the City.

Last year, the SIB found that up to 1.5 million investors may have been wrongly advised to switch out of company pensions

and into private ones. Compensating them could cost billions of pounds.

In February, Barings, one of Britain's oldest merchant banks, collapsed with debts of £800m following the activities in Singapore of Nick Leeson, a former futures trader.

One source said yesterday: "Clearly there are problems with the present system which have to be looked at, including the problem of competition between different regulators, but we do not recommend that they should be folded into one at this stage. If the present system does not work there will have to be a rethink."

Another MP added: "I think

there has been agreement among all the members that a lot of the regulatory system has been moving away from self-regulation to a more formalised structure anyway. What are in favour of it is a move towards a more unified system, which has some statutory backing, under a common umbrella. But what we are also keenly aware of is that we do not want to damage the City's ability to generate more business. Nor do we want to damage its reputation."

The MPs have already decided to reopen their inquiries into the collapse of Barings and the role of the Bank of England in this debacle. They hope to begin their inquiry next year.

Watchdog storm on gas contracts

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry watchdog, has clashed with the Government over long-term contracts between British Gas and North Sea producers, which are forcing the company to buy much more gas than it can sell.

Ms Spottiswoode has angered ministers and sent the company's shares plummeting by warning publicly that British Gas's financial position is "not obviously secure".

A senior Whitehall source accused the regulator of "dramatising the problem in a way which will not help the industry". He said: "There is absolutely nothing new in the issue of the contracts. What she has done is to give it a prominence that makes it appear to come out of the blue. I do not think it will do the reputation of the regulator any good."

Tim Eggar, Minister for Energy and Industry, said last night: "We have known about the importance of this issue for many months. In my view it is in the interests of both British Gas and the producers to renegotiate. I have already made it clear it is better for this to be settled commercially, but if I, or the Department of Trade and

Industry, can help as a facilitator we will be happy to do so."

He declined to comment on Ms Spottiswoode's warning, saying that the independence of the watchdog must not be compromised. Although Ofgas has no formal jurisdiction over the contracts, she has a duty to be concerned about the financial standing of the company.

British Gas shares fell by 11p to 236.5p after the comments by the watchdog. But the company, which declined to comment, is privately pleased for the problem to be aired. Cedric Brown, chief executive, recently called for more government support in renegotiating the contracts in the face of tough resistance from the producers. But the DTI insists that "direct" intervention is out of the question.

The contracts - largely entered into when British Gas was still a monopoly - will by the end of this year have forced the company to buy about £700m worth of gas it cannot yet sell. One City analyst said the sum could reach £1.3bn within four years.

The price paid by British Gas under the contracts is about twice that which rivals can achieve on the spot market, which has enabled competitors to win market share in the industrial and commercial market.



Phil Edmonds: to step down as Middlesex chairman

Owen to bowl for Middlesex

NIGEL COPE

Lord Owen, the former Bosnian peacekeeper, and Sir David Alliance, the Middle Eastern émigré who chairs Coats Viçela, have joined forces in a new corporate adventure.

The former SDP leader was appointed as chairman of Middlesex Holdings, a tiny mineral trading group with interests in the former Soviet Union.

He replaces Phil Edmonds, the former cricketer, who chaired the group for the past three years. Mr Edmonds, who enjoyed a suc-

cessful career as a Middlesex and England off-spinner, will remain on the Middlesex board as a director until stepping down from the board at the company's annual meeting in June.

He yesterday raised £850,000 when he sold 10 million shares in the company. He will retain 5 million shares. The shares rose from 8.25p to 9p yesterday.

Sir David also became involved when he formed a partnership with the company to export steel products worldwide from far-flung parts of the

former Soviet empire.

It is Lord Owen's first executive directorship of a public company since he stepped down in the summer as the European Union's peace negotiator in Bosnia. Last year, he was appointed as a non-executive director of Coats Viçela, Sir David's textiles group, where he is paid £20,000 a year.

At Middlesex he will be a part-time executive chairman on a salary of £50,000 a year. He will also be awarded 10 million share options. It is not clear how many days a week Lord Owen

Direct Lin
agrees t
with Roy



Grid direct
his windfall

Standard seeks



COMMENT

'It was only the threat of a windfall profits tax that beat Hanson and the Americans into submission'

Grid pulled from the privatisation wreckage

Screaming and shouting, the 12 regional electricity companies have finally been forced into line on flotation of the National Grid. Barring another hiccup, the shares should begin trading on 11 December. If anyone can take the credit for this, it is Tim Eggar, the Energy Minister. Without him, it almost certainly wouldn't have happened at all.

By the end, at least half the Rees were opposed, some more vehemently than others. It was not always thus. Originally, there was virtual unanimity of support. That, however, was at a time when the Rees anticipated some benefit to themselves in terms of a substantial cash windfall. It soon evaporated.

Indeed, some of the newcomers to the industry, Hanson and Southern Electric of the US, thought the rewards of flotation to themselves so poor that they withdrew support and became obstructive. They used the complex negotiations over detail as a way of promoting their own objections in principle. To Hanson and the Americans, the idea that the Government should decide what they should do with an important asset was anathema. It was only the threat of a windfall profits tax that beat them into submission.

For its part, the Government secures on behalf of the consumer a £50 per bill rebate, thus mitigating some of the criticism it has encountered for failing to realise the value

of the National Grid when the Rees were privatised. This is hardly going to save a government as unpopular as this one, but at least Mr Eggar has salvaged something from the electoral wreckage of privatisation policy.

An accounting standard for the Eighties

The publication of the Accounting Standards Board's latest pronouncement – on "related party transactions" – comes with the definite sound of stable doors crashing shut after the horse has bolted. This is a standard aimed at executives and managers with a tendency to muddle their own private financial affairs with those of the publicly quoted companies they work for. While it does still happen, the main offenders passed away with the 1980s. The push for action came not so much from accountants – who with so much unfinished business on matters such as goodwill, deferred taxation and fixed assets, have bigger fish to fry – as the Department of Trade and Industry, which wants more done to combat fraud.

Like the ASB itself, the new standard has clear roots in the corporate collapses of the early 1980s. The idea is to expose not only the links between public and private busi-

nesses but also the specific detail of those links – house purchases, relocation expenses and other possibly suspect transactions between companies and their executives. In the words of ASB chairman Sir David Tweedie, "It is not enough to look at the puppets; users need to see the strings and know who is pulling them."

Now that financial engineering is out of fashion and companies appear more inclined to abide by the law as handed down by the no-nonsense Sir David and his ASB colleagues, it is tempting to think there is no need for this sort of thing. But the standard is not merely backward-looking. Times change and if there is a repeat of those conditions, FRSS could prove an added bulwark against company directors who have difficulty defining where their own and shareholders' interests begin and end.

The problems, though, will come with trying to implement it. The lack of any standard in this area until now is testament to its complexity, and auditors and company officers grappling with it will find themselves dealing with a multitude of definitions. Not the least of their difficulties will be deciding which transactions should be covered, since the standard extends the group of people involved from directors to "key management". It also says the test of disclosure

will be materiality to the individual rather than the company. Judgement is obviously going to be the order of the day.

Fresh breeze at the Bank

Howard Davies has wasted little time in introducing his experience of modern management techniques to traditionalists at the Bank of England. Mr "Call me Howard" Davies has spent a large part of his early weeks as Deputy Governor dropping in unannounced on staff to have a chat about their concerns.

Nothing like this ever did any harm but the Bank's well-known morale problem runs too deep for the classic techniques of hired-in management consultants. The series of presentations to Bank staff which started on Monday, and the working parties they have created, are no kind of solution.

The root of the problem is the tougher demands now being put on the Bank and its staff. These stem both from the Bank's more important role in monetary policy – which has been more difficult than anticipated since the Chancellor disagreed with the Governor in May – and the need to meet any post-Barings and BCCI concerns about the

Bank's supervisory abilities. It is a big task – more so because it coincides with fundamental reorganisation and big job cuts.

The restructuring, launched by Mr Davies's predecessor, Rupert Pennant-Rea, 18 months ago, has divided the Bank into sheep and goats – monetary policy-makers and supervisors. The supervisory goats do not feel good about the herding of high-fliers into the monetary arm.

In addition, layers of hierarchy have been removed so that promotion prospects have vanished. Treasury restrictions mean the Bank cannot use big pay rises to improve effort and morale. Luring outside recruits on higher salaries is allowed, but it is obviously divisive. In the past the Bank has been able to count on the public service ethos of its generally loyal staff to overcome some of these problems. But as the enthusiastic amateur gives way to the thrusting young professional, loyalty becomes harder to rely on. Such are the penalties of modernisation.

Sense of public service will diminish with the increase of the harsh facts of modern business life. This is the conundrum Mr Davies needs to tackle. It is in the Bank's interest if he can take its modernisation close to completion before a new Labour government decides it has better ideas about how to reform the Bank of England.

Direct Line chief agrees to stay with Royal Bank

JOHN WILLCOCK
Financial Correspondent

Peter Wood, the man who created the Direct Line phone insurance success story and who was bought out by its owners Royal Bank of Scotland for £21m last year, has had his contract extended with the bank for a further two years.

The Direct Line advert featuring the red telephone on wheels could soon cross the Atlantic in a new US direct insurance venture from Mr Wood, who was yesterday given Royal Bank's blessing for the project.

Royal Bank said Mr Wood "will be permitted to invest, together with a number of other associates, in a new US company which will engage in the direct selling of motor and household insurance in the USA, Canada and Mexico".

Sources close to Royal Bank said Mr Wood, who launched the Direct Line phone insurance arm and was bought out last year, approached the bank recently with his proposal to repeat this success in America. He is linking with American insurer Plymouth Rock, an East Coast company dealing in fire, accident and life insurance, and has other investors in line.

Amid the bid speculation surrounding Royal Bank, it has been suggested that a potential defence could have been the threat that Mr Wood would walk in the event of a hostile offer.

It is understood that Royal Bank, and in particular its chief executive, George Mathewson, were keen to retain Mr Wood's services, but not for that reason. He has been the subject of intense press speculation in



American way: Peter Wood will invest in a new company selling insurance in the US, Canada and Mexico

the last week, with suggestions that he would leave the bank if it was taken over.

He will remain a main board director of the bank and boss of Direct Line, with a new contract reflecting the time he will spend in the US. He was bought out of his original Direct Line bonus agreement by Royal Bank last year for a total of £21m and given a £350,000 salary.

Royal Bank is prevented from holding more than 5 per cent of the new venture's equity because it already owns a US retail bank, Citizens Financial, and US rules limit

Freshfields appoints top partner

Anthony Salz, head of the corporate department at Freshfields, the international law firm, is to become the firm's senior partner when John Grieves retires on 1 May next year.

Mr Salz, 45, who was a key witness in the Guinness trial, topped a recent league of mergers and acquisitions lawyers in *Legal Business* magazine, prompting one observer to say: "He is M&A at Freshfields."

He's so good that he puts really good people in the shade." Tim Freshwater, corporate partner at rival firm Slaughter & May, said: "He is ... one of the leading corporate finance lawyers in the City ... not only well-regarded but well-liked."

Among the deals in which Mr Salz has played important roles are SmithKline Beecham's merger with Beecham, the deal between Reed International

and Elsevier, and the proposed merger between TSB and Lloyds Bank.

To enable him to continue to devote time to clients, Alan Peck, the firm's managing partner and another specialist in mergers and acquisitions and share issues, will become chief executive. Ian Terry, a partner specialising in commercial litigation and arbitration, is appointed managing partner.

Mr Salz, a graduate of Exeter University, qualified as a solicitor in 1974. Joining Freshfields in 1975, he then spent a year with the US firm Davis Polk & Wardwell before becoming a partner in 1980.

Freshfields, where Mr Grieves has been the senior partner since May 1990, has 153 partners and more than 600 other lawyers in 14 offices around the world.



Anthony Salz: mergers and acquisitions specialist

Is your bank making more out of your business than you are?

BUSINESS BANKING CHARGES*					
All costs in pence	Miffland	TSB	Barclays	New West	Business Direct
DEBITS					
Chèques	48	35	38	44	35
Standing Orders	48	35	38	44	35
Direct Debit	48	35	38	44	35
Chèques Cashed	48	35	38	44	35
CREDITS					
Chèques	79	95	80	81	79
Anticredits	12.5	19	16	17.5	12.5

Grid director to give his windfall to charity

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

At least one director of the National Grid Company plans to give the special dividend he gets from the stock market flotation of the distribution company to charity. The move follows political pressure and calls by two electricity companies for Grid directors to forgo their windfall.

John Uttley, finance director, said he would give the £60,000 dividend from his shares to charity after paying tax. But other directors, including the chairman, David Jefferies, who gains about £200,000, declined to say what they will do with their windfall.

The £3.5bn flotation of the

National Grid will go ahead on 11 December after payment of the £272.5m special dividend to existing shareholders – mainly the 12 regional electricity companies in England and Wales.

The regional firms are also expected to gain about £300m from the Grid's generation arm, which will be hived off in advance of the float.

The wave of electricity takeovers means that less than half of the shares in the Grid will be listed initially, with six regional firms that have been taken over or are the subject of bids holding back. But the Government, which retains a special share, has demanded that those six companies or their new owners reduce their stake to 1

per cent within a year. Until they sell, the voting rights will in any case be limited to 1 per cent.

The restrictions in voting rights reflect the Government's determination that the Grid should be seen to be independent. Details of the flotation show that the Grid will pay a dividend of £175m in the year to 31 March 1996, net of any tax credit, rising to £190m the following year. The new company will be known as National Grid Group.

Separately it emerged that the nuclear industry, which is soon to be privatised and known as British Energy, could be sold off with up to £40m of liabilities in its balance sheet.

Standard seeks savings deal

NIC CICUTTI

Standard Life, the UK's largest mutual life company, is considering launching a short-term savings account to help stem part of its annual £200m drain when policyholders' funds mature.

The link-up would be through Bank of Scotland, with which Standard Life also hopes to develop a personal loans service for its clients.

The Scottish insurer's move comes as Prudential, one of its biggest rivals, announced plans to launch a telephone banking

service offering building society-type savings accounts and mortgages.

Other leading insurers are believed to be considering link-ups with existing banks or building societies. Under this scheme the insurer gives its name to an account and markets it but it continues to be administered by the other institution.

Both the Pru and Standard Life are hoping to keep their hands on some of the funds they are forced to pay out annually. Last year the life insurance industry paid out more than

£13bn on maturing life policies. A Standard Life spokeswoman would not comment on any possible account launches. She also dismissed suggestions that the company might increase its 33 per cent stake in Bank of Scotland in order to challenge the Pru head-on.

But it is understood that the new account under consideration would target policyholders who are undecided as to where they want to place their money in the long term. Standard Life would offer rates of interest that compare with building societies.

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Smiths remains pick of the bunch

There was understandable caution in the run-up to Smiths Industries' figures yesterday, following disappointing performance from a number of the engineer's peers. Not Smiths, however, which reported another set of solid results and justified our comment last April that it was the pick of the bunch in the areas of aerospace, medical equipment and industrial products.

Profits and margins grew in all three areas, no mean feat given the troubles in the aerospace industry that have led firms such as Lucas to scale back operations. Pre-tax profits up 17 per cent to £138m – on turnover also up 17 per cent at £899m – were slightly above forecasts and were accompanied by an encouraging confidence about the future.

Star performer was the medical division, which contributed 45 per cent of Smiths' operating profits and has the capacity to grow still further. Smiths' £135m purchase last year of US medical operation Deltec – part of £390m spent in the past three years – has not diluted earnings as feared and margins in the division remain stable. Any further purchases are likely to be made in this area, and Smiths is unconcerned about US healthcare reforms.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the industrial businesses also advanced rapidly, making profits 34 per cent ahead at £37.6m on sales of £249.7m. A lot of this profit was bought through acquisitions, although Smiths says 10 per cent of the profit rise was from existing businesses. While recent acquisitions have yet to make a full impact, however, the rate of growth at the industrial division can be expected to slow in line with general economic conditions.

The aerospace businesses also invite caution in the short term. On the military side the company is doing well, and recent contracts by the UK and Dutch governments for Westland's Apache helicopters mean orders for Smiths' electronic hardware. But on the civil side, which accounts for 40 per cent of turnover, things are not so positive: 1996 will be the nadir for the building of civil airlines, with a pick-up for the industry from 1997. And US planemaker Boeing, to which Smiths is a big supplier, is going through protracted industrial action and may soon start cutting production.

Smiths is strong enough to weather such hiccups, although investors should perhaps hold back until the picture becomes clearer. Pre-tax profit forecasts for this year are around £155m,

with 35p of earnings. A prospective price/earnings ratio of 17 reflects a solid and well managed company knocking on the door of the Footsie index, but it doesn't leave much room for disappointment.

WPP reassures the doubters

A respectable 8 per cent growth in revenues in the first three quarters of 1995 will soothe WPP shareholders who doubted highly-paid chairman Martin Sorrell and his turnaround strategy.

Thanks to strong growth in the US and UK advertising sectors, the integrated ad and market services holding company managed to add sales even as it cut debt – by 20 per cent in the period. Moreover, revenue growth also suggests higher productivity gains.

But what about the future? Advertising companies are notoriously subject to economic cycles, riding the booms and plunging with the busts. Could WPP be in for a fall? Probably not. It is far more resilient than some

competitors on marketing services, public relations and the like. Activities such as direct marketing, promotion and other services, which represent about 40 per cent of revenues and about 30 per cent of operating profits, are less vulnerable to the ups and downs of economic cycles.

That provides some protection, but even the more volatile advertising business is betting that governments in the key markets of the US and the UK will not allow their economies to slow down too dramatically in the lead-up to elections.

Even if the markets don't help, Mr Sorrell reckons WPP is firing on only three of four cylinders, and wants to see improvements in the performance of the public relations arm, Hill & Knowlton. Progress there, as well as further growth in market share in the US and UK advertising markets, could add another 1 percentage point to margins.

The third quarter's new business looked good. Ogilvy & Mather took on a \$50m account from Kodak and another \$45m from Cheesborough Ponds. In the UK, J Walter Thompson won business from Stena Sealink, the cross-Channel ferry operator.

Earnings for the full year could easily hit £110m, or about 9p a share, for a price-earnings multiple of about 17 at last night's unchanged close of 154p. Pricey, but probably sustainable, if 1996 is as good as predicted.

Little cheer at Enterprise Inns

The biggest challenge facing Enterprise Inns over the past few weeks has been convincing institutions that it is anything more than a rather dull rent collector and beer wholesaler. Judging by the price it has achieved for its £41m share placing, it can feel pretty pleased with its presentation skills – investors would demand more than a 5.5 per cent yield if they could really see no growth in earnings or income.

But the fact remains that Enterprise's end of the pub-owning market, 486 tenancies in the Midlands, North-west and Yorkshire, lacks the glamour of the successful managed pub groups such as JD Wetherspoon, Regent Inns and the latest entrant, Tom Cobleigh.

Although Ted Tuppen, chief executive, describes the business as a retail partnership with the pubs' landlords, in reality it enjoys only a 5.5 per cent yield on its £84.2m property portfolio and a margin on the beer it ties its tenants into buying.

Coming to the market will ease some of Enterprise's challenges, wiping out £12m of mezzanine debt which, at 8 per cent over base rates, is a miserable way to have to raise finance. Arguably it should have tried to raise more, reducing gearing below 50 per cent and giving it a fair chance of leveraging the shareholder return from subsequent acquisitions.

Without that, it is a little difficult to see where the growth will come from to justify a payout that, while attractively above the market average of under 4 per cent, compares unfavourably with the yield offered by a host of solid, but out-of-favour, Footsie companies. A prospective price/earnings ratio of nine is cheap but appropriate.

Interest from private clients, who have a claim on 20 per cent of the £41m firm placing, is reported to be strong, so the issue is unlikely to be a flop. But anyone expecting a repeat of the sparkling share price performance enjoyed by Wetherspoon and Regent will be disappointed.

Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

Gowrie gets his teeth into the property world



Lord Gowrie: In for a nightmare?

Photograph: Reuter

Not content with his vampire role in the forthcoming BBC horror movie, Lord Gowrie has embraced another nightmare – the shadowy world of property. The former Arts Minister and unpaid chairman of the Arts Council has taken the Martin Landau shilling and signed on as the £25,000-a-year non-executive chairman of Development Securities.

Yesterday's announcement ends a seven-month search for a public figurehead to revive the fortunes of the group. In spite of some high-profile deals – last week the company was chosen to develop the old M15 headquarters at No 1 Curzon Street – shareholders have remained a largely disgruntled bunch.

The share price rocketed two years ago when Mr Landau, a 1980s wheeler-dealer who rode out the recession in Monaco, returned to take control. But the man who once cost the Church Commissioners a fortune in a speculative development in Kent failed to deliver the fireworks. The shares have headed south ever since.

What Lord Gowrie can do remains unclear. He has no experience in property and the appointment of a former government minister to the board is not always a good omen. Witness Lord Lawson at GPA, the aircraft leasing company, Lord Tillet at BET and Lord Gowrie himself at Ladbroke, where he is a non-executive director.

Nonetheless, the shares responded with a 1.5p rise before settling firmly back in the groove at 141.5p.

The long trek from Teddington to central London (two hours if you are lucky) has finally proved too much for Greg Dyke, chief executive of Pearson Television, who has now privately declared the old Thames TV studios to be no longer suitable as a corporate headquarters.

The man who gave the country Roland Rat is looking for a temporary London base so that he may enjoy better access to his City and Soho contacts. Longer term the plan is to sell the Thames TV studio and move the whole operation closer to the City.

A nasty moment for Sir Nicholas Henderson at the Lloyd's Bank British Fashion Awards on Tuesday night, where he nearly became part of the show. Arriving late, the former diplomat and company director sneaked in a side entrance – only to be confronted by a battalion of half-naked Galliano models who swept him inexorably towards the stage.

He was last seen ducking and diving against a tide of flesh. The decision by the Italian parliament to prevent mobile telephone reception in the chamber by erecting a signal deflector over the building has prompted raised eyebrows from European service providers. There is concern that the move could set a precedent that will

eventually limit market growth. The Italians are passionate about their mobile phones. The contraptions are still seen as status symbols – even though Telecom Italia has the largest subscriber base in Europe. That said, the quality of parliamentary debate was being jeopardised, with MPs constantly on the blower. Will we shortly see signal deflectors in the UK? Over Buckingham Palace perhaps? Vodafone does not think so. "The Italians do love to chat," said a spokeswoman. "The British are more sensible."

The fall from the Labour front bench of Martin O'Neill does not necessarily herald a quieter time for the former energy spokesman. Mr O'Neill is tipped as the next chairman of the Trade and Industry Select Committee when Richard Caborn steps down. Mr Caborn's stint at the committee is ending because he has been promoted to the front-bench team. With the investigation into nuclear privatisation just beginning, Mr O'Neill will be in for a baptism of fire.

Ever since Jacques Chirac became French president in May, it was clear that the 10-year-old commitment to the franc fort would be tested. The policy of tying the franc to the German mark through hell and high water was simply inconsistent with the absolute priority he gave in the election campaign to reducing unemployment.

Round one of the battle between the new government and the foreign exchange markets went to the Banque de France. The pessimists who predicted an immediate devaluation of the franc were confounded. Instead the French central bank was able to ease interest rates down over the summer against a background of an appreciating franc.

Round two has just as clearly gone to the "gnomes of London". The run on the franc earlier this month forced the central bank to push up short-term interest rates, which fed through to bank lending rates last week.

Now the third and probably decisive round of the battle is on the verge of being joined. As in earlier European exchange-

If Chirac is to create new jobs monetary policy has to relax

rate crises, the first exchange of fire has occurred over a peripheral currency in this case the Italian lira. Silvio Berlusconi's tabling of a no-confidence motion in Lamberto Dini's administration has been upstaged by a resounding vote of no confidence by the currency markets.

Before long, they will switch attention again to the French franc. Neil MacKinnon, currency strategist at Citibank, now projects a fall in the franc to 3.75-3.80 to the mark within the next couple of months. Other economists, like those at Paribas, predict a more modest fall to 3.60 by the end of the year.

Yet there is no consensus among economists that the franc is overvalued. Unsurprisingly, officials say that the franc is fundamentally strong. This view is supported by the fact that the economy is running a healthy current account surplus of about 1 per cent of gross domestic product.

Trends in unit labour costs suggest that the franc is not overvalued against the German mark. Even against weaker currencies like the pound, you can make an argument



ECONOMIC VIEW

PAUL WALLACE

Stern test lying round the corner for 'franc fort'

that the franc is fair value. The pound has depreciated by some 20 per cent against the franc since Britain exited the exchange rate mechanism three years ago.

However, since then unit labour costs in manufacturing have fallen by 5 per cent in France while they have risen by about 3 per cent in Britain. If you accept that the pound was overvalued by about 10 per cent when Britain was in the ERM, that suggests that the franc is about where it should be against the pound.

The case for the sceptics is that the apparent health of the current account is misleading: it indicates a slackness of domestic demand. The franc is indisputably stronger against the peripheral currencies, compared with the position three years ago.

The strength is most palpable against the Italian lira – something that matters, given the fact that Italy is France's second most important trading partner.

On balance, the case of those who argue that the franc is overvalued, certainly against the peripheral currencies, seems more convincing. As British tourists have found out the hard way this year, France is a very expensive country to visit nowadays – something that matters, given the significance of tourism to the economy.

And given the extent of the unemployment problem, what France may now need, as Julian

Jessop, European economist at HSBC Markets, has observed, is an undervalued currency. But in large measure the debate over the underlying value of the franc is neither here nor there. For the real misalignment that is hampering the French economy is of interest rates rather than exchange rates. With inflation at around 2 per cent, bank lending rates of over 8 per cent are simply too high. Short-term interest rates are 3.5 points higher than those in Germany and long-term rates 1 point higher. Bear in mind that the French economy emerged out of recession more than a year after the UK, so it is still only in its second year of recovery.

Yet already that recovery is flagging. At the end of last year the economy was bounding along at about 4 per cent. That expansion tapered off to 2.8 per cent in the second quarter and appears to be slowing still further.

The crunch point is the effect of that deceleration on unemployment. When the economy was rattling along, the jobless count was falling quite quickly. Now that the recovery is slowing down, the prospects for raking continuing inroads into unemployment – still 11.4 per cent – look bleak.

And yet, when campaigning, Jacques Chirac pledged to make unemployment the absolute priority. The social tensions caused by the continuing blight of joblessness mean that the campaign pledge remains serious.

Earlier this month, the industry minister, Yves Golland, said that if something were not done about unemployment and poverty, France could face an upheaval similar to the riots of May 1968.

Few doubt that France has to tackle some of the structural reasons that account for high unemployment – such as excessive social security costs for employers and a minimum wage that is set too high, particularly for young people. But for structural read long-term – and as Keynes observed, in the long run we are dead. In the short to medium term the best cure for unemployment is strong growth.

If the French government is to meet its objective of 700,000 new jobs by the end of next year, monetary policy has to be relaxed. This is all the more so since fiscal policy is being tightened as part of the plan to conform with the Maastricht convergence criteria.

At 5 per cent of GDP, France's budget deficit is far removed from the 3 per cent level which the Germans are insisting must be observed to the letter of the law by 1997 if

Something has to give – that is the message of the markets

monetary union is to go ahead. Here then is the paradox of the current stance of French economic policy. If France is to move within hailing distance of a 3 per cent budget deficit in just two years, strong economic growth is essential and this involves taking off the monetary brakes.

A simulation by the OECD in its recent report on France showed that the effect of cutting interest rates by 2 per cent would be to raise domestic demand by 1 per cent and cut the budget deficit by a similar amount. Yet that monetary relaxation can only come about if the French abandon the franc fort.

The French have invested enormous social and political capital in the policy of tethering the franc to the mark. But something has to give – that is the message that is coming from the markets. The fact that the French persevered with the policy so assiduously in the 1980s may be less relevant, now that the crucial problem is unemployment rather than inflation.

Before long, the franc fort could well be tested to breaking point.

Upbeat VW back in the black

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Volkswagen, Europe's largest car maker, pointed to continuing recovery in the motor industry by reporting better-than-expected earnings for the first nine months.

Net profits of DM185m (£85m) compared with a DM73m loss last time. Ferdinand Piëch, the chairman, was upbeat about the future.

Sales for the period totalled DM65.209bn, up 10.9 per cent

from DM58.8bn a year earlier, while global deliveries totalled 2.66 million vehicles, up 6.4 per cent from 2.5 million.

Mr Piëch, who at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September forecast that full-year profits would be slightly up, was more bullish yesterday, saying they would be "noticeably better". Last year's annual profit was DM150m.

Volkswagen, which has about 16.9 per cent of the European car market and 6.4 per cent in

the US, had been hit by industrial disputes by the powerful IG Metall union.

The workers have won significant concessions, including a shorter working week, which caused concern among some German politicians and business leaders.

Mr Piëch said the results were "all the more impressive for being influenced by the production shortfall in connection with this year's wage negotiations". He added that the

Suspended Roxspur pleads for more cash

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

Roxspur, the specialist engineer, was locked in discussions with its main shareholders last night, trying to persuade them to inject extra capital into the business following the suspension of its shares at 6.5p. The company blamed the ambitious acquisition in April of Wills, a pumps and valves company four times its size and in a much more financial state than expected.

A statement yesterday said: "Following the offer for the Wills Group it has become clear that the trading position of that company when it was acquired had deteriorated to a level that was substantially worse than anticipated."

"As a direct result, Roxspur has been experiencing and continues to experience severe short-term cash-flow difficulties." A deal to sell one of Wills' principal trading subsidiaries floundered although it is understood that the putative buyer has not withdrawn completely.

Roxspur acquired Wills largely to get hold of Platon International, an engineering company acquired in a hostile takeover in 1993. The problems occurred elsewhere in the Wills

group. At the time of the deal, Ian Orrock, Roxspur's chairman, was heralded as the company's saviour. A former divisional head at Racal, he had been parachuted in by bankers who hoped he would build Roxspur up into a large group.

The result of negotiations with shareholders to raise working capital for the troubled group will be known by the end of the week and Roxspur is expected to return from suspension on Monday. At the current level, the shares have lost almost three quarters of their value over the past year.

Back in March, with a remit to "dramatically enhance" prospects over the next two or three years, Mr Orrock said he was preparing to "roll up our sleeves and get into the factories and stay there until they are going well".

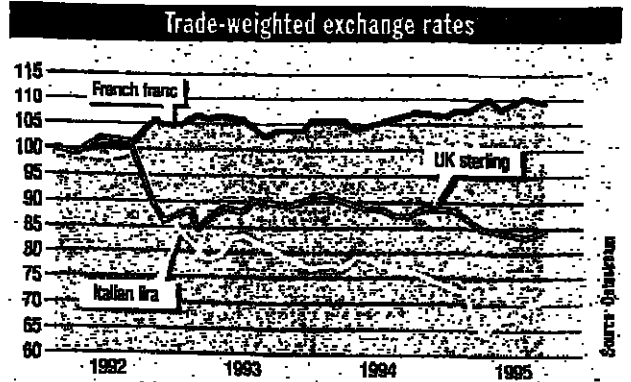
Margins of 5 per cent were talked about on the enlarged group's £60m sales thanks to a cutting out of duplicated costs and growing demand for the specialist pumps the company supplied to the water and oil industries.

Roxspur raised £11.5m via a placing and open offer to fund the 16p a share partial cash offer that accompanied the deal.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Anglo Japanese (F)	0.35m (0.21m)	-0.05m (0.04m)	-0.45p (0.09p)	nil (nil)
Canal (F)	8.08m (4.48m)	2.11m (0.62m)	4.4p (1.3p)	nil (nil)
Charmers (F)	1.07m (0.34m)	0.11m (0.08m)	0.42p (0.27p)	nil (nil)
Public Works (F)	1.01m (0.37m)	-3.81m (-0.05m)	-0.25p (-0.01p)	nil (nil)
Preston Oil (F)	11.1m (10.8m)	1.74m (0.82m)	8.7p (6.7p)	nil (nil)
Shahid (F)	13.5m (14.8m)	0.31m (0.62m)	3.55p (7.14p)	1p (1p)
Smiths Industries (F)	8.07m (4.63m)	310m (265m)	7.9p (7.6p)	3.2p (3p)
Smiths Industries (F)	889m (788m)	138m (118m)	31.3p (26.7p)	14.4p (13p)
UDD Holdings (F)	52.4m (47m)	6.82m (4.81m)	15.31p (11.85p)	9.5p (8p)

(U) - Quarterly (F) - Fiscal (F) - Interim



سكرا من الامل

market report/shares

TAKING STOCK

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

Kingfisher makes a clean breast of plans for recovery

Kingfisher, the struggling retail group that last week ended its long search for a chairman with the appointment of Sir John Banham, has decided investors should know more about its recovery plans. This week it held an investment presentation on its restructuring offshoot and is due soon to subject its troubled Comet electrical chain to the same treatment.

Row companies bother with analysts' presentations if the story is all gloom and doom; consequently Kingfisher shares were busily traded with the price edging ahead to 485p. But the group is not confining its message to the UK, with talk of a US roadshow next month ahead of a December trading statement.

Sir John, former director general of the Confederation of British Industry, takes over next year. The group has been without a permanent chairman

since January when Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy switched to chief executive. Four directors then departed in a boardroom shake-up.

The group's profits for the year to end January tumbled from £309.3m to £244.2m. Pre-tax profits for the first half of the current year were £74.6m, down from £88.1m with the group's B&Q do-it-yourself operation creating cause for concern.

The shares hit a 1995 high of 510p earlier this month; a long way from their 772p peak last year. At the time of the boardroom upheaval they were down to 389p.

The rest of the stock market experienced another low-volume day with the FTSE 100 index closing just 2.5 points higher at 3,537.8.

Worries the Bank of England could suffer another government stocks auction humiliation had already evaporated by the time it was announced that the £30m sale was comfortably over-subscribed. But any euphoria was short-lived with New York looking jittery.

Castbury Schweppes was subjected to one of its periodic bouts of takeover speculation. But the excitement soon petered out. Reports in Switzerland that Nestlé planned a strike briefly lifted the shares 8p. They closed unchanged at 525p.

First Leisure Corporation was also in the bid frame. There was talk Rank Organisation was keen to take on FLC's management and had decided the easiest approach

was to absorb the company. John Conlan, FLC's chief executive, it was argued, could emerge as Rank chief executive when the present incumbent Michael Clifford retires. FLC shares, firm this week, rose 18p to 346p with Rank 2p higher at 418p.

Meyer International, the timber group, also attracted bid speculation. The shares rose 15p to 355p with rumoured predator, Harrisons & Crossfield, a shade easier at 151p. On the banking pitch bid gossip continued to influence with Standard Chartered up 15p at 514p.

Asda, still engaged in a battle to cut prices of certain

minerals and vitamin products, edged ahead 0.75p to 100.5p. Credit Lyonnais Laing's Paul Smiddy believes Asda and Tesco, up 2p at 305p, are the best supermarket buys. Kwik Save, little changed at 684p, is regarded as a sale.

British Gas was as unloved as its chief executive Cedric Brown following the stinging comments of industry regulator Clara Spottiswood: the shares slumped 11p to 236.5p, lowest for three years. Turnover approached 21 million shares.

Engineer Glywedd International put on 4p to 343p as Mees Pierson contemplated lifting its forecast from £86m to around £90m; ASW, a steel products group, tumbled 20p to 176p with SBC Warburg slashing its profit forecast from £23m to £12.5m.

Glass Wellcome, meeting analysts in two weeks, rose 2.5p to 860p and a United News &

Media presentation added 6p to 520p. Amstrad, following an analyst visit to its Danish operations, improved 7.5p to 292.5p.

Thorn EMI fell 20p to 1,494p as a large line of stock, thought to be around 2.5 million, sought a home.

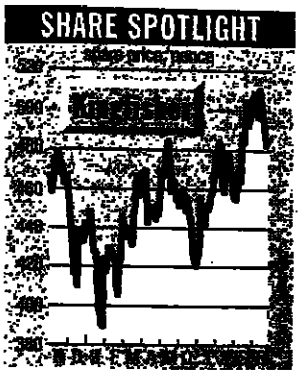
Building and related shares attracted a few buyers with Wolsley recovering 20p to 396p and Barrett Developments adding 6p to 197p. Casket, the cycle maker, advanced 0.5p to 75p as the bid duly materialised with EFG the predator.

Middlesex, the metals group, rose 0.75p to 9p with more than 40 million traded. Creos International, a maker of generators for medical scanners, made a bright AIM debut, touching 125p and closing at 109p. Northamber, a computer hardware and software distributor, gained another 14p to 225p.

Unipalm, the largest UK access provider for the Internet international computer network, rose 11p to 446p, influenced by US buying. The group has accepted an offer of around 450p a share from UUNET Technology of the US. But many speculators had expected the bid to be nearer 700p and it is not surprising that talk of a rival offer is circulating. A Dutch telephone group is the favourite to strike.

Biocompatibles International, the medical group where US giant Johnson & Johnson has a stake, jumped 29p to 372p as the Specsavers chain, with more than 300 optical branches, said it was recommending the company's Proclear contact lens. The shares were floated at 170p a share in April.

DATA BANK	
FT-SE 100	3,537.8 + 2.5
FT-SE 250	3,906.4 + 1.6
FT-SE 350	1,760.5 + 1.1
SEAQ VOLUME	634.8m shares
26,483 bargains	
Gifts Index	99.19 + 0.62



BANKS, MERCHANT	
Barclays Bank	418.00
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FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES									
STERLING					DOLLAR				
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	B-MARKS	
US	1.5292	12-10	25-30	1.0000	—	—	0.7172		
Canada	2.1584	5-17	21-11	0.7000	—	—	0.5776		
Germany	3.9013	10-18	125-41	1.3642	2-19	—	1.0000		
France	7.7531	35-70	105-189	4.8362	60-65	—	1.7500		
Italy	2.4945	85-100	120-237	161.15	30-35	—	0.9734		
Japan	188.65	—	—	101.19	47-48	—	100-148		
Belgium	4.2535	10-14	27-31	1.3000	1-20.45	—	0.5489		
Denmark	13.0000	7-8	21-25	23.67	4-7.17	—	103.11		
Netherlands	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Sweden	2.4945	63-84	108-118	1.2616	27-24.8	—	81-78		
Switzerland	0.9710	10-14	24-25	1.2512	1-4	—	103.11		
Spain	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Portugal	2.4945	63-84	108-118	1.2616	27-24.8	—	81-78		
Greece	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
India	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
South Africa	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Israel	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
South Korea	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
China	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Thailand	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Malaysia	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Singapore	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Philippines	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Indonesia	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Brunei	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Myanmar	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Laos	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Vietnam	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Cambodia	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Timor	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
East Timor	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
North Korea	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
South Korea	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Japan	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
China	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
India	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
South Africa	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
Israel	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
South Korea	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		
China	16.4944	—	—	9.4157	—	—	1.4048		

STATFORD

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1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 278: 1039-1044.

sport

Boxing administration is called into question after fatalities, but if the sport is to survive fighters will have to bear greater responsibility

A worrying implication of new safety measures introduced by the British Boxing Board of Control yesterday is that many professional fighters choose to ignore the perils of dehydration.

The Board's decision to call for random appearances on the scales springs from the knowledge that, despite repeated warnings, boxers world-wide continue to take alarming risks with the potentially dreadful effects of dramatic weight loss when preparing for championship contests.

That most tragedies occur in the lighter divisions may be explained partly by the effort of staying beneath natural weight in order to secure championship opportunities.

Significant in this respect is that while the results of heavy blows to the head are evident in Muhammad Ali's sad condition, and Joe Louis died miserably before his time, more than 30 years have elapsed since a heavyweight lost his life as the result of injuries received in the ring.

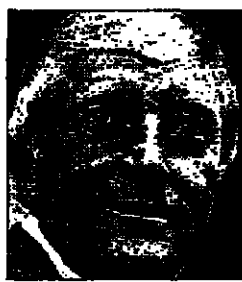
When fatalities happen, boxing administration is inevitably called into question, but if the sport is to survive into the next millennium fighters will have to bear greater responsibility. "They need to be more honest with themselves," Henry Cooper, the former heavyweight champion, said on television this week.

As there are plenty of examples

historically of men barely being able to stand up on the scales, it is inexcusable when fighters today abuse the advantage of weighing-in at least 24 hours before a title contest which from now on will be mandatory throughout British boxing.

Announced at a pound inside the super-middle limit of 12st for a title contest against Roy Jones in Las Vegas earlier this year, James Toney agreed to be weighed again by Marc Ratner of the Nevada State Athletic Commission shortly before entering the ring. Heavier by 19lb, he had not regained the strength lost in reaching the stipulated limit and was easily beaten.

The Board are to be commended for making dehydration a



KEN JONES

priority issue but little confidence can be held in the tentative proposal to call off championship bouts unless both contestants achieve stipulated weight targets during preparation.

An immediate conclusion is that even the threat of a fight not taking place would be unacceptable to the television networks who fund the sport, and interfere seriously with the world title prospects of British boxers other than those at work in the heavyweight division.

When the Board's general secretary, John Morris, said yesterday: "There is a great deal to be considered, but I think that it [a report drawn up by an independent panel of neurosurgeons] will make sense to anyone who is prepared to look to the future of our sport," he may have been thinking internationally.

This applies probably to the sophisticated Magnetic Resonance Imaging brain scans all British

boxers will be required to take at the risk of losing their licence.

It may be thought that the Board have not gone far enough in addressing the perils inherent in a sport that has come under fresh attacks since the death of James Murray two weeks ago in Glasgow, but there is always the problem of legality. Preventing a boxer from going to the ring on the grounds that he is not sound medically is not as simple as it may sound.

However, recommendations that will be put to licence holders at the Board's next annual general meeting are at least a step in the right direction.

A big problem for the sport's administrators generally is that they are

always coming up against market forces and that extravagant television presentation persuades viewers to suppose that they are watching just another form of cartoon violence.

Boxing is nothing of the sort, as a colleague once realised when first watching the sport live. "I didn't realise just how hard professional fighters hit," he said. "The terrifying impact is lost on television."

It is in that context that professional boxing considers nervously the understanding that there are sure to be further tragedies. No matter how much is done to ensure that fighters get the best care possible, there does not seem to be a way of protecting them from themselves.

Fulton's outburst provokes inquiry

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

The Australia coach, Bob Fulton, has been accused of verbally attacking the World Cup referees' director, Greg McCallum, at last Sunday's semi-final against New Zealand.

Fulton is charged with approaching McCallum "in an aggressive manner" after the match went into extra time and telling him: "It's a carve up, and it's a slight on your name."

Australia have now made an official complaint about the handling of the match by the referee, Russell Smith, claiming that he only "refereed one team in the second half".

The Australian camp was furious over the penalty count against them as the Kiwis fought back from 20-6 to 20-11, but McCallum said yesterday: "I have studied the video recording of the match and can see no reason whatsoever for criticism of Russell Smith's general handling of the match."

"The heavy penalty count in the second half - 6-1 against Australia - was mainly due to their players holding down opponents at the play-the-ball."

Fulton's behaviour has been referred to the International Board's disciplinary committee, which is likely to meet on Sunday. The tournament director, Maurice Lindsay, said: "It would be a shame to detract from what was a magnificent semi-final and from the final itself, but we cannot let the matter go without investigation."

The Australians would not comment yesterday, beyond their manager, Geoff Carr, saying that the coach had his full support. The affair is the latest manifestation of the bad blood, which has gone well beyond normal Anglo-Australian parameters, during the World Cup.

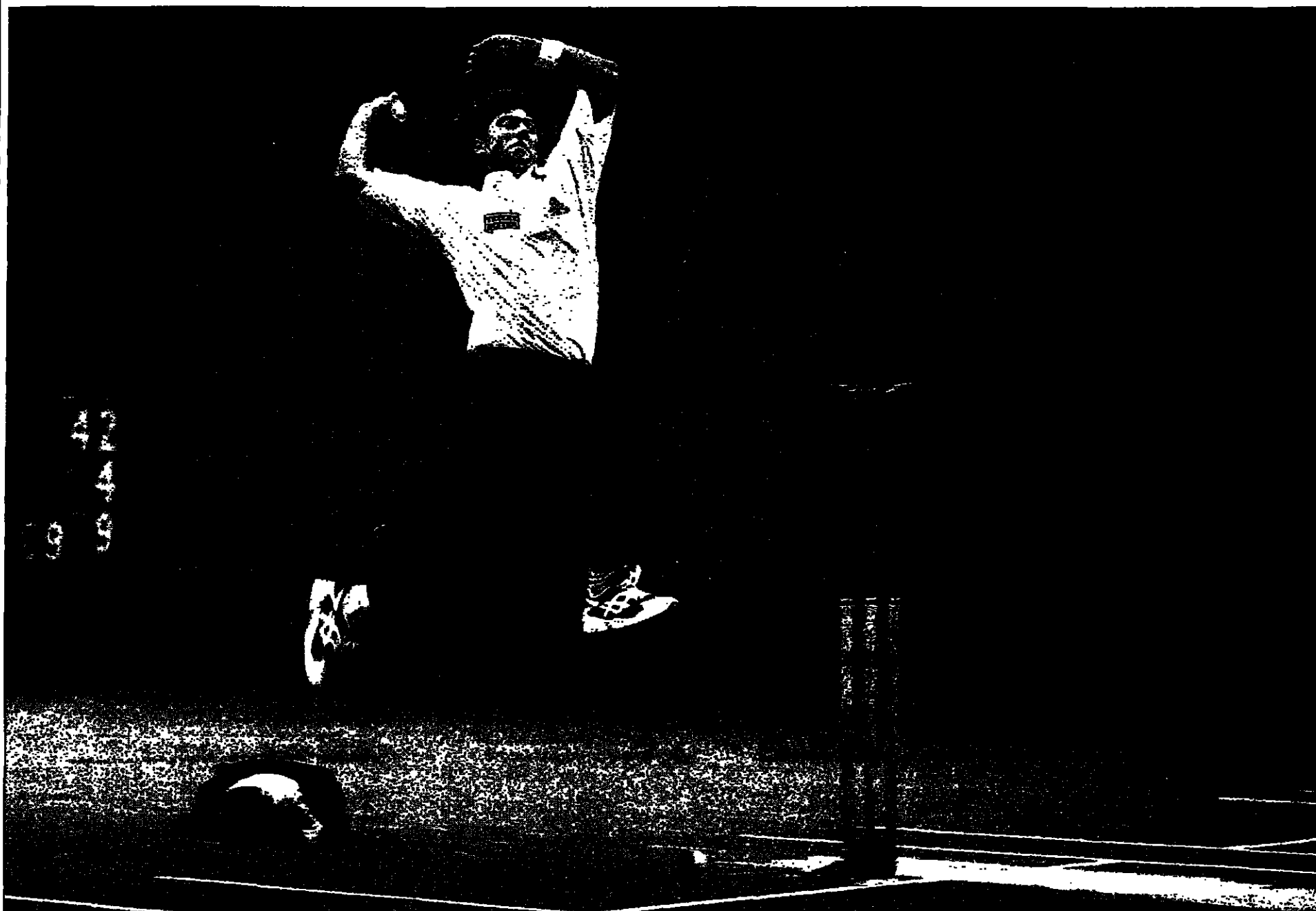
Although a truce was declared for the tournament, Fulton's role as captain of the Australian Rugby League's resistance to Super League, with which Britain has aligned itself, has never been far from the surface.

The British Amateur Rugby League Association has complained bitterly about the cancellation of its match against the Cook Islands, the winners of the Emerging Nations World Cup.

The game had been planned for Wigan tonight, but the Cook Islands and their final opponents, Ireland, felt that was too soon after their match. Barla's suggestion that the game should be the curtain-raiser at Wembley had been rejected by Lindsay.

Where Ireland is on absolutely firm ground is when he talks about what his aim is: to play Test cricket for England. To that end he left his native Lancashire two years ago to try to make it with Essex. "We had a strong squad, with lots of all-

ENGLAND A TOUR: Young Essex man puts his back into his future as next crop of Test cricketers set sail



All-round effort: Ronnie Irani honing his skills in Chelmsford before setting off for Pakistan - 'I want to get better and this is what I have to do'

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Emburey takes on role of diplomat

Diplomacy will be almost as high a priority as winning games for the England A team who leave for a two-month, three Test tour of Pakistan today.

The side, under the management of John Emburey, is the first England outfit to tour Pakistan since Mike Gatting's infamous Shikoor Rana tour of 1987 ended in acrimony.

Emburey, who was on that tour, is now 43, and is excited at the prospect of leading many of England's emerging stars on what will undoubtedly be a tough tour - both on and off the field. "This is a bridge-building tour for cricket, and not just English cricket," he said.

"We are not scheduled to send a senior team to Pakistan for another seven or eight years, but in the shorter term the experiences we have this winter will not only greatly benefit our young players but also give us valuable information ahead of the World Cup next spring."

"I'm sure there will also be certain players we will come across who will be involved in the World Cup. This A team squad is full of good players, and my job is primarily to help them improve their cricket and to iron out any technical flaws."

"But most of all we will be talking about the game, and learning. I played a Test match last summer and I have a very good rapport with the younger players. Coaching is something I'm passionately interested in and I hope to be coaching at county level next summer."

"There will be discipline both on and off the field, but I hope the players will enjoy themselves and have a winning tour. I was very impressed when I visited India last winter to spend some time with Alan Wells' A team. I hope we can establish the same positive approach this time."

Salim Malik, the former Pakistani Test captain, has been cleared of bribery charges by a former Pakistani Supreme Court judge, Fakhruddin Chowdhury, who was asked by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to investigate allegations of bribery made by Australian players, said: "I believe 100 per cent that Malik is innocent."

ENGLAND A SQUAD: N Hoggan (Essex), J E R Giffen (Lancashire), S S H Giddens (Sussex), D W Howley (Worcestershire), A M Stanger (Gloucestershire), J G Pooty (Middlesex), I D K Salisbury (Sussex), A M Smith (Gloucestershire), R D Stamp (Yorkshire), S O Ishaq (Gloucestershire), C White (Oxfordshire), Tour manager: M D Vockins, Cricket manager: J E Emburey.

Emburey: "The further you get in this game, the harder you have to work to stay there," he says. "I am going on this tour to learn. I am going out there to improve my cricket and I will be going out there with pride."

"It's going to be exciting. Hopefully we will come out winners, that's the main thing." He may be a touch hazy about his past, but there is certainly no doubt that he is putting his back into his future.

Irani committed to the work ethic

Ronnie Irani is engagingly hesitant about his ancestry. "My father's ancestors were originally from Persia," he said, breaking off from a session in the indoor cricket school at Chelmsford as he prepared for the forthcoming England A tour to Pakistan and India. "Parsees. The Iranis are Zoroastrians. I think my father was brought up in Bombay. That's about it, really."

He gives an embarrassed laugh before continuing: "My mother is from Bolton." Now he is on surer ground. "My father came over here to play League cricket, met my mother and stayed here. He played for Atherton cricket club. I am born and bred English."

Where Irani is on absolutely firm ground is when he talks about what his aim is: to play Test cricket for England. To that end he left his native Lancashire two years ago to try to make it with Essex. "We had a strong squad, with lots of all-

rounders in my last year - Wasim Akram, Mike Watkinson, Phillip DeFreitas was still there, Ian Austin, of course, and Jason Gallian. I was just about to break through. I wanted to push myself as an all-rounder, not play as a batsman. I wanted to improve my bowling, but I wasn't getting the opportunity."

He played a handful of first-class games for Lancashire in his five years on their books before deciding to move. He had an Essex contact, Graham Saville, who was also the England Under-19 manager. Hearing of Irani's unhappiness, he suggested that the youngster pack up and head east. "Essex was the type of county I wanted to play for," Irani said. "A county that looked to win."

He was picked for the opening Championship match in his first season, 1994, hit an unbeaten half-century in the second match and has become a fixture at No 6 since. That first season he scored more than 900 runs, last summer he passed 1,000 in the Championship for the first time.

Irani has taken more than 50 wickets for Essex in those two seasons, but his bowling still needs more work, which was why he was at the indoor school in Chelmsford on a muggy autumn morning. Working with two coaches, a video camera and some soft chalk, he sends down a stream of deliveries before retiring to an office to study, frame by frame, each of those deliveries.

"I'm getting inside the line, there," Irani says at one point, then: "My head is falling away there." A few frames and another delivery later: "But I've kept it straight there."

Irani takes his cricket seriously. He wants to succeed. He

could just as easily have been putting his feet up after a long hard summer and only stirring himself into belated action when the England A management told him to.

But that is not Irani's style. He celebrates his 24th birthday today as he flies out to Pakistan, and for someone so young displays a senior's sense of responsibility in his preparations.

"It's boring stuff, really, what I am doing today," he explains, "but I want to get better and this is what I have to do - and it's no good me running up against problems with my bowling once we are out there, they have to be sorted out now."

"England A is important to me. It is a stepping-stone to greater things. Hopefully, there will be the chance of England

honours coming up soon. I just have to wait to see what happens."

Except that sitting around and waiting for something to happen is just not Irani. That is why he left Old Trafford. "I don't think I would have been called up to England A if I had still been with Lancashire. I think I would probably have just been breaking in to the first XI. I might even have been a second teamer still. That's what I was with them two years ago. Plenty of ambition but nowhere to go. I might have gone stale and chucked it all in."

Had he done that, though, he would not have had a mention on television. "A little while ago, I heard the likes of Ian Botham and Bob Willis saying: 'Irani should go to South Africa'. It made me realise that I must be good enough, to be in consideration for a tour place."

"I didn't ever actually think I would get picked for the senior tour, but the A tour sud-

Two Scots prepare to make every penny count

Golf

TIM GLOVER reports from Sotogrande

Sam Torrance and Colin Montgomerie were team-mates in the Ryder Cup and the Alfred Dunhill Cup, but this week the cheques and the champagne will not be taken in communion. A marathon duel that began in the desert in Dubai last January reaches its climax in the Volvo Masters at Valderrama here.

Torrance leads the European Tour's Order of Merit with £630,481.28 to Montgomerie's £626,651.40, and whoever finishes top of the money list on Sunday will receive an additional £125,000. The bonus pool amounts to £500,000 and the event's prize money is £750,000.

Torrance and Montgomerie are clear of all but Bernhard

Langer and, with so much money available, it is distinctly possible for the German thoroughbred to unseat the Scottish stayers. Langer, who is 260,307.11 behind Torrance (the small change could count in the final analysis), won the Volvo Masters 12 months ago, but Monty, who finished fourth, won the Order of Merit for the second year running. Torrance has never won the marathon, although he was pipped to the post by Langer in 1984.

The 42-year-old Torrance will celebrate his 25th year as a European Tour player in style if he finishes in front of Monty here and Langer is not in the top two. However, the Scots are showing signs of wear and tear, having taken part in a longer, more concerted campaign than Langer. While Torrance and Montgomerie were going the

distance again at St Andrews last week, Langer was restricting himself to a gentle match against teaching professionals in Munich. "Of course I won," Langer said. "If I hadn't, I shouldn't be playing."

Torrance, meanwhile, is on antibiotics to cure a chest infection and is off alcohol. As he thoroughly enjoys a pint and a roll-up, this could be a handicap for Sam. "I don't think there can be any more pressure on me this week than I had at the Ryder Cup," Torrance said, "and if I was able to handle that, I can handle this week as well."

As for Montgomerie, he has been suffering from a sprained left wrist and on Monday he consulted a specialist. "He told me to rest," Monty said. "If there was a danger of any permanent damage, I wouldn't be here." The rise and rise of Big

Monty in the merit table since 1988 is 52nd, 25th, 14th, 4th, 3rd, 1st, 1st. He pointed out that he has won more money than at this stage last year. "It just so happens that Sam Torrance has done particularly well," Monty said. Note the more formal tone. Last week at St Andrews, it was Sam this, Sam that, no mention of a surname. "It doesn't matter if it was Joe Bloggs," Montgomerie said. "I'd like to beat him."

As it happens, the three principal contenders go out in sequence at lunchtime today: Torrance, followed by Montgomerie, followed by Langer. And they call it a draw? "If the wind gets up and the greens get spiky, it'll be the same for all three of us. That's quite fair."

What he does not consider fair, however, is what Jaime Or-

tiz Patino, Valderrama's owner, has done to the 17th hole. The landing area for the drive has been reshaped and the slope of the green changed. "They're trying to copy the 15th at Augusta," Montgomerie said. "I don't know why we should be penalised for hitting the ball a long way. The rough spoils the whole thing and the green is far too hard. They've altered it so many times they should have had it right by now."

Last year, Seve Ballesteros was employed to change the 17th, which is a par five with a lake in front of the green. Miguel Angel Jimenez got an albatross two there, but since then Patino has made further changes. Montgomerie - and he is not alone - thinks the character of the hole has been ruined and it is now virtually impossible to get the ball anywhere near the flag in two.

"They have taken away the spectacular shots," Monty said.

The criticism of the 17th will be greeted with shock-horror by Patino, not least for the fact that his masterpiece is, of course, the venue for the 1997 Ryder Cup. Valderrama (considered *numero uno* for mainland Europe) has been promoted from 86th to 51st in the world rankings, and Patino was confident of further improvement on the basis of changes made to the 17th.

Meanwhile, the course promises to be as unrelenting as ever. The field is restricted to the leading 54 in the merit table and yesterday in the pro-am, 11 of them, including Torrance, failed to return a score. At least they went out. Philip Walton, one of the Ryder Cup heroes, was fined £500 for a no-show. The Irishman had a misunderstanding with his alarm clock.

Sports letters

Flouting the law ...

From Mr R Phillips

Sir, Further to Steve Bale's Commentary on last Saturday's Wasp-Bath encounter illustrating the negative blight that is still apparent in our game, I would like to question further the complete lack of control of the offside law by officials. The persistent flouting of that law in ruck, maul and lineout is still the game, while at the same time an expansive and adventurous approach in the southern hemisphere is funding the new professional era.

Yours sincerely
ROBERT PHILLIPS
Redland, Avon

... or misapplying it?

From Mr S Cottam

Sir, I read with interest a letter from A Leslie (19 October) re-

garding the Independent's coverage of the jailing of Duncan Ferguson. Following Ferguson's imprisonment, where is outside interference in sport going to end? Sporting authorities should be allowed to apply their own punishments for misconduct involving participants in the sport.

In my view Ferguson, a hero to Everton fans of all ages, has been made an example of by the Scottish authorities in an appalling display of interference and inconsistency. Ferguson was not even booked by the referee for his "offence".

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN COTTAM
Bristol

Letters should be marked "For publication", contain daytime and evening phone numbers. They should be sent to Sports Editor, the Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL. They may be shortened for reasons of space.

Rusedski has trouble switching to the 'bubble'

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Essen

Life has not quite turned into a goldfish bowl for Greg Rusedski, although the British No 1 was less than happy playing in a "bubble" at one of the world's richest tournaments yesterday.

some but almost transparent marquee next door with seats for 600 spectators. After sampling both, Rusedski wondered if the event had moved overnight.

It was difficult enough for Rusedski to be facing Marc Rosset, a 10th-seeded opponent with a similar serve-volley style. "I saw a mirror image of myself, except with a harder serve" - without having to chase "shadows" as the sunlight came and went. The silhouette of a tree intermittently decorated one end of the court.

Rusedski, who was defeated 6-4, 6-4 in the second-round match and will now turn his attention towards his debut at the National Championships at Edgbaston next week, did not overlook the point that the Swiss Olympic champion was the better man on the day. "I just think it's wrong that at a two-million-dollar event conditions on the two courts are completely different," he said. "The light changes so much in the bubble that you're not sure whether

you're playing indoors or out. Todd Martin was quite livid after losing his match." Martin was defeated by Sweden's Thomas Enqvist, 6-3, 6-4.

Watching Rusedski was Warren Jacques, the former British Davis Cup captain, who has taken over as his coach for the remainder of the year in the absence of the American, Scott Brooker, who is unable to travel. Rosset had no complaints about the "bubble". He was simply pleased to have served and

returned so well after recovering from a wrist injury. Andre Agassi, playing on the Centre Court, was encouraged by his form in his first contest since damaging a chest muscle during the Davis Cup semi-final final between the United States and Sweden five weeks ago. The world No 1 defeated Jacco Eltingh, 6-2, 6-4.

Neath exorcise demons of Fiji

Rugby Union

STEVE BAILE
Neath 30
Fiji 22

Gareth Llewellyn proved a point to the Welsh selectors who have ignored him; Neath proved a point to a far wider public. Yesterday's invigorating game at The Gnoll was all anyone - except the luckless Fijians - could have hoped.

Even if Fiji are not the equivalent of Springboks or All Blacks, many of them are playing in New Zealand or Australia and, with the exception of an obscure 1971 defeat of West Germany, this was Neath's first victory over any touring side and so worthy of celebration.

The tourists saw a 17-3 advantage evaporate as Neath came storming through to win with more to spare than they dared hope when events were going against them in the first half. The exorcising of past demons was a useful by-product, though last season's violent South Africa match would have been all but forgotten but for the club's insistence on keeping the issue alive.

Before yesterday's game the Welsh Rugby Union published a statement exonerating everyone of everything that occurred on that dark November night - a conclusion they had apparently reached about nine months ago but that Neath insisted be made public now.

Which was somewhat beside the point while the Fijians were trying to weave their magic. One or two members of their pack may be ponderous and their ball-winning may lack conviction but in broken play they are a delight, backs and forwards handling with a facility that makes British players look cack-handed by comparison.

The 55-year run by Leveni Vaturua - a lock-forward, mind you - which produced Fiji's third try was the most obvious example, but the close combinations that had created the previous tries by Jonetani Waqa and Manasa Bari equally exemplified the Fijian rugby of legend and tradition.

To this Neath had their own answer. They qualified for this fixture by finishing fourth in the Welsh First Division last season and lie sixth with more than a quarter of this campaign gone. But this is a changed team made up largely of likely newcomers - a bit like Wales, really - and on this evidence they have a considerable future.

This optimistic assessment is based not simply on the rousing, sensibly varied and highly mobile rugby they played, vaguely Fijian in fact, but on their indomitability when things were going badly against them. The threequarters were responsible for the tries by John Funnell, the impressive Leigh Davies and the winner by Chris Higgs, with the pack providing a contrast by driving hard to set up Chris Scott's.

Walter Smith, the Rangers manager, has pointed the finger at his stand-in players for his side's Coca-Cola Cup semi-final defeat by Aberdeen on Tuesday night.

Herbert's future in the balance

Motor racing

Johnny Herbert's chances of joining the team who took Jackie Stewart to two world titles could be scuppered not by his proven ability, but by dint of his very Englishness.

The Warwickshire-based driver has been linked with a possible move to Tyrrell-Yamaha next season following his dropping by Benetton-Ford. Switching to the home of a former champion - Stewart won two of his three titles at Tyrrell - after being dropped by the current champion Michael Schumacher's team, would be a consolation prize, despite the Woking team's lack of competitiveness this season.

However, Herbert's hopes as far as Tyrrell are concerned - he is also being mentioned for the vacant Sauber-Ford seat - could be dashed by engine supplier Yamaha's keenness for a Japanese driver.

The Finn, Mika Salo, has already been retained for next year - which leaves Herbert only the seat currently occupied by Japan's Ukyo Katayama to aim for.

Herbert did not see any Japanese driver in Formula One, it would be very sad," said Takashi Kimura, Yamaha's project leader. "It is also good for the company, our workers and Japanese motor racing."

If he does make the switch, then Herbert, who competed in one race for Tyrrell in his debut season, will be powered by one of the lightest engines ever developed for Formula One racing. The company has high hopes that its new V10 engine will help achieve its most successful season since entering this area of the sport in 1989.

"Our target is to win Formula One," Kimura said. "But for the next couple of years, the realistic target is to get more points and get on the podium."

Herbert is already known in Japan, having competed in the country's Formula 3000 series in 1990 after his grand prix career had been interrupted by a serious racing accident.

He is reported to have pitched his salary demands too high, while Katayama, who has had a disappointing season, can bring much-needed sponsorship to the team.

However, the 31-year-old driver has shown he is capable of winning races. His triumphs at Silverstone and Monza have taken him to fifth place in the championship. Herbert believes his future should be decided after the Japanese Grand Prix, the penultimate race of the season, which takes place on Sunday.

"After Suzuka I should know exactly where I am going," Herbert said. "I want to stay in Formula One. IndyCar is for the future - it is not something I want to do at the moment. If I do stay in Formula One, it will be with a team who I believe will give me the chance to win races. If I feel the team are not giving the right signals, I won't go there."

"It may be more of a challenge for me being in a second-ranked team and trying to put them just the top rank."

Meanwhile, the Formula One season nears its close. In the penultimate race of the season, the attention will be on whether Schumacher can equal Nigel Mansell's 1992 feat of nine wins if he takes the chequered flag on Sunday.

The newly crowned world champion could then become the first driver to reach double figures in a season, with another victory in Australia, although the German has had the advantage of an extra race this year.



Active service: Pete Sampras powers his way to a straight-sets victory over Stefan Edberg in Essen yesterday

Photograph: AFP

Smith beset by problems after another Rangers failure

Football

Walter Smith, the Rangers manager, has pointed the finger at his stand-in players for his side's Coca-Cola Cup semi-final defeat by Aberdeen on Tuesday night.

In addition, Paul Gascoigne's disciplinary record is proving another headache for Smith, with the £4.3m signing collecting four yellow cards in eight domestic games.

The Ibrox club were yesterday picking up the pieces after a second failure in a big match in the past week. After their 4-1 Champions League thrashing in Turin by Juventus last Wednesday, Rangers were then swept aside by Roy Aitken's team at Hampden.

Eoin Jess, rejected by Rangers as a youngster, outshone Gascoigne and set up the first of striker Billy Dodds' two goals with a superb 70-yard run at the Ibrox defence.

The defeat means Smith's champions for the past seven years, who already lead the Premier Division by six points, have not won a domestic cup since October 1993.

Seven of their leading players were missing from the 2-1 defeat, with Richard Gough, Brian Laudrup, Charlie Miller, Stuart McCall, Ian Ferguson, David Robertson and Trevor Steven all out injured.

All must now be rated doubtful for next Wednesday's Champions' League return against Juventus, with a league visit to Raith Rovers to come on Saturday.

A groin injury cost Gough his ever-present record so far this season and his injury may have been one absence too many for the champions - although Smith refused to use it as an excuse.

"We've been disappointed for most of the season," Smith said in reference to the injuries. "I think some people are looking

at the way we are playing and taking comfort in the injuries, but when you have a squad like we do then they should be capable of winning games like the semi-final."

"The squad we had out against Aberdeen was capable of far better than they showed."

Rangers had to give the reserve team coach, John Brown, 33, his first start of the season but, despite the absence, still fielded £10m of summer sign-

ings in Paul Gascoigne, Oleg Salenko, Stephen Wright and Gordon Strachan.

"We didn't do enough in the first hour or more to punish Aberdeen," added Smith. "After Aberdeen scored they were by far the better side and we didn't do nearly enough to win the game."

Smith will tomorrow face the club's annual general meeting, when a £455,000 profit for the year end to 31 May 1995 will be announced.

The Rangers manager is expected to be re-elected as a director, although he and the chairman, David Murray, could face some disgruntled questioning at Glasgow's Concert Hall.

Gascoigne's simmering temper is another problem for Smith, with the England midfielder edging closer to a suspension. The England and former Lazio player has been booked four times in eight domestic games as well as once in two Champions' League ties.

India under the weather

Cricket

India crawled to 54 for the loss of Ajay Jadhava in 168 minutes on a rain-shortened opening day of the second Test against New Zealand. Heavy rain delayed the start and bad light forced an early closure after just 35.3 overs.

Manoj Prabhakar batted throughout after Mohammed Azharuddin had won the toss and elected to bat, remaining unbeaten on 19 from 110 balls. Navjot Sidhu, who replaced Sanjay Manjrekar in the team that won the first Test in three days at Bangalore last week, had scored 18 off 72 deliveries.

Jadeja, who scored 73 in the second innings at Bangalore to set up India's eight-wicket victory, never looked comfortable during his 38 minutes at the crease and he was bowled for three by a full-pitched delivery from Dion Nash. Nash and Chris Cairns bowled economically on a helpful pitch, with Nash conceding 14 runs in 10.3 overs, while Cairns gave away just eight in 11.

Danny Morrison, though, was erratic, conceding 11 no-balls in his 10 overs. The only two fours of the day came from Sidhu, who twice struck left-arm spinner Mark Haslam to the boundary.

Perkins to make Games drug protest

Swimming

Kieren Perkins, the Australian long-distance swimmer and Olympic 1500m freestyle champion, is ready to stage a personal protest against drugs in sport during the swimming medal ceremonies at next year's Olympic Games in Atlanta.

"The governing bodies don't seem to want to do anything and I think it's getting to the stage now where we have to take such drastic action," Perkins said.

"I would be willing to show my opposition to steroid use during a medal ceremony if I'm involved in one. Hopefully, it will open up the world's eyes to what is going on," said Perkins, who criticised Fina, the sport's governing body, over its stance on doping.

"It is quite obvious to me that Fina is not prepared to do anything and would prefer to just ignore the situation. They simply do not listen to the swimmers."

McManus makes his mark

Snooker

For the first time since capturing the Dubai Classic title in October last year, Alan McManus is back in the semi-finals of a ranking competition, the Skoda Grand Prix in Sunderland.

For the third match in a row he dropped only one frame, with Northern Ireland's Joe Swail his latest victim. "I didn't feel I was capable of competing for trophies until recently," McManus said after his 5-1 win. "I re-

India under the weather

mained to be seen whether I can win a tournament again, but it makes a big difference to feel I am in with a chance."

Swail, appearing in his second successive ranking quarter-final, showed his ability with an excellent 104 to open his account in the final frame before the mid-session interval. However, McManus took over after the break. He was poised to overtake Jimmy White's 105 as the highest breaking break, but missed the final blue after reaching 98.

Perkins to make Games drug protest

Following Tuesday's High Court writ issued by Lorenzo Lewis, Frank Warren has stated that Frank Bruno will fight any legal action to stop his meeting with Mike Tyson. The Lewis camp insist their fighter is the rightful opponent for Bruno's first World Boxing Council heavyweight title defence, but Tyson's installation as the WBC's No 1 contender has thrown the whole issue into dispute.

Manoel Dominguez, of Argentina, overcame a brave challenge by Russia's Sergei Volkov to retain his World Boxing Council cruiserweight title in Lavallois-Perret, France. On the same bill, Alexander Gurov, of Ukraine, took the European cruiserweight title by stopping the holder, Patrice Audouin of France, in the fifth round. Tommy Morrison, the heavyweight contender stopped in the sixth round by Lennox Lewis earlier this month, has been charged with assault for allegedly punching a woman in the face and being another woman's finger on 15 October near his home in Jay, Oklahoma.

McManus makes his mark

McManus made his mark in the Skoda Grand Prix in Sunderland, dropping only one frame to beat Joe Swail 5-1. McManus was in the semi-finals of the Dubai Classic in October last year.

McManus was in the semi-finals of the Dubai Classic in October last year. He was in the semi-finals of the Dubai Classic in October last year.

India under the weather

India under the weather in the second Test against New Zealand. Heavy rain delayed the start and bad light forced an early closure after just 35.3 overs.

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TODAY'S NUMBER

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The number of days that Hull City FC have been given to pay a debt of £252,770 to the Inland Revenue by the High Court. The club, who avoided a winding-up order yesterday, hope to raise the money by selling players.

SPORT

Cavalier England struggle in the heat of battle



Peter Martin despondent as Mark Mitchell makes headway

Cricket

JAMES ALEXANDER
reports from Springs

A match under the floodlights of an ugly converted rugby ground could not provide a greater contrast than the opulence of Oppenheimer's place the previous day. The differences did not end there, either. Whereas the opening match of the tour was strictly cucumber sandwiches and jolly japes, this had a real sizzle – and England struggled to stand the heat against Eastern Transvaal.

This is not exactly cause for manic depression just yet, but it was not an auspicious performance by the XI trumpeted

by Raymond Illingworth as the best one-day team from the 16 players on this tour. The bowling was wayward in both line and length, the fielding was sloppy and three catches went to ground. England's batting was cavalier rather than controlled and they paid the penalty.

The final 10 overs arrived with 68 runs needed and Mark Ramprakash remained the only realistic hope of an England victory. None of the other main batsmen had provided the necessary big score and Ramprakash, who has looked in encouragingly fine fettle during the first week, was left to try to see England through the closing overs. He was as stylish as ever, but was badly dropped at

mid-on immediately after passing fifty and survived a vehement appeal for a catch at the wicket in the next over.

Little could disguise the fact, though, that Eastern Transvaal, spurred on by a blindly partisan crowd and assorted puerile jingles over the tannoy, were more competitive. This was a huge occasion for a team whose standard is above minor county but not quite first-class county.

Perhaps the portents were not good for England when a tyre on their coach burst at 60mph on the journey to Springs, which is 25 miles east of Johannesburg. Easterns' batting was not quite so explosive, but it certainly contained a few fireworks. Wayne Radford, an

attractive and forthright opener, reached his fifty by hoisting Richard Illingworth over mid-wicket for six and went on to 92 until Dominic Cork held a stinging return catch.

Mark Mitchell, son of the Test umpire Cyril who was standing in this match, was among the other batsmen who contributed usefully. Chad Grainger provided the desired late acceleration with a half-century from 41 balls.

England's target presented a stiff challenge and they attacked it like a runaway roller-coaster. Alec Stewart pulled two boundaries past mid-wicket before falling to a superb, diving catch by the same fielder. Graeme Hick was dropped by the wick-

(Eastern Transvaal won toss)

EASTERN TRANSVAAL	
W R Radford c and b Cork	92
M Mitchell b Illingworth	52
C P Martin b Gough	52
C Grainger not out	29
S A Sheehan c Smith b Martin	2
S A Sheehan run out	10
Extras (bds, wds, nbs)	24
Total (for 5, 50 overs)	244
Falls: 1-115, 2-168, 3-211, 4-253, 5-261	
Did not bat: G P Cooke, +18 McBride, G D Stevenson, J R Meyer, L C R Jordan	
South Africa: 10-2-49-1; Fraser 10-0-45-1; Illingworth 9-0-62-1; Hick 2-0-12-0	

ENGLAND	
M A Atherton c Sheehan b Jordan	33
J A Stewart c Sheehan b Stevenson	34
G A Hick c and b Meyer	22
G P Thorpe b and b Meyer	22
R A Smith not out	33
M R Ramprakash not out	27
D G Cork not out	5
Extras (bds, wds, nbs)	14
Total (for 5, 40 overs)	165
Falls: 1-11, 2-28, 3-107, 4-119, 5-165	
To bat: D Gough, P J Martin, R K Illingworth, A R C Fraser	
Umpires: C Mitchell and B Lambson	

More cricket, page 31

Bergkamp can win title, says Wilson

Football

Dennis Bergkamp's demonstration of his abundant talent left the Barmsey manager, Danny Wilson, predicting he would bring the title to Highbury, but the £7.5m striker is willing to wait – for a while.

Bergkamp's delicacy of touch and outstanding vision were evident again as he inspired Arsenal to their impressive Coca-Cola Cup victory at Oakwell on Tuesday night.

It was the Dutchman who was responsible for Arsenal's first two goals in their 3-0 win, rifling home the second from 22 yards, four minutes after Dave Watson had spilled his searing free-kick into Steve Bould's path.

Bergkamp said his rapid adjustment to the English game was vindication of his decision to leave Serie A for the Premiership. "When I came to Arsenal, it was because I thought we could win the League. It was important to me and when you look at the start we've made,

that's very satisfying," the former Internazionale player said.

"But I agreed a four-year contract and want to win something during the course of those four years – whether it comes in the first year or the fourth is something we'll see. Of course it's very early to make predictions. The only thing we can do at this time in the season is go out and win every game we can.

"But there's no doubt that we've got a lot of real quality through the team. Time will tell, of course, and as I said, it's not desperately important that we do it this year. If it comes, it comes, but we've started well."

Bergkamp's contribution against Barmsey earned the manager's admiration. "I thought before we played them that they would win the championship and what I saw only cemented that thought in my mind," Wilson said. "They're so very solid and composed at the back and when they get the chance to play football, they do so."

Arsenal have won eight of their last nine games – sand-

wiching their only defeat of the season so far, at Chelsea – and Wilson said that Bruce Rioch's new-look Gunners, with David Platt soon to return, were frighteningly strong.

"They've always had those solid foundations at the back, but Bruce has added that extra flair to them, and in Bergkamp he's got an extra dimension," Wilson said.

"Bergkamp is just class. As a defender, you're always on your heels against him because you know he pops up everywhere, and when he gets the ball he's just so confident in his ability. And he can look after himself as well. Some of our defenders kicked him up the backside, so he left his foot in occasionally."

"He wanted them to know he was there and that's part and parcel of the game, but it's one of the reasons why they'll finish up on top."

Bergkamp's goal was his sixth of the season, and with fellow striker Ian Wright already having scored 11, the partnership is already looking to provide all that Rioch had hoped for.

Bergkamp said he was enjoying working alongside the man whose England career never blossomed, despite his consistency in the Premiership.

"The good thing about playing with Ian is that when I get the ball, I know I can play the ball into him," Bergkamp said.

"I think it's a partnership that's good for both of us. Ian wants to have somebody around him who can feed him and I need somebody in front of me who I can find. It's going well."

More football, page 31

São Paulo's Supercup kicks

Any fears that Juninho might find it difficult to come to terms with the rough and tumble of Premiership life at Middlesbrough were put into perspective yesterday by a South American Supercup match, involving his old team-mates, São Paulo, who were playing at their Brazilian rivals, Cruzeiro.

São Paulo took the lead in the ninth minute, but it was the Cruzeiro defender Rogério who really got things going by kicking an opponent in the face, for

which he was duly sent off. His team-mates rushed to protest to the referee, and central defender Vanderlei, as well as midfielders Rabinho and Marcelo were also shown the red card.

At the start of the second half, Cruzeiro's Luis Fernando Gomes limped off injured and the referee was obliged to abandon the match as Cruzeiro, with all three substitutes on, were down to six players – below the minimum number required. The result stood.



Shouldering the burden: Fiji's Bolobolo rides high above the Neath pack at The Gnu yesterday during the Welsh club's 30-22 win. Report, page 31. Photograph: Peter Jay

ITV secures European Cup for £20m

Rugby Union
DAVID LLEWELLYN

England's players, who have been battling long and hard with the Rugby Football Union to get a financial deal in place before they take on the well-paid South Africans next month, may have had another money-spinning avenue closed off.

The inaugural European Rugby Cup has sold the broadcasting rights to ITV for £20m over the next three years, with the promise of more cash to come from the tournament's sponsors – expected to be the Welsh League backers, Heineken – today.

However, it is by no means certain that English clubs, who, like Scotland, were unable to take part this year, but were expected to participate from 1997-98, will do so. The RFU secretary, Tony Hallett, said last night: "We have certainly made no commitment for next year – or to this competition."

"We strongly support the concept of English clubs in Europe, but we feel that this competition does not have the high profile and organisation that will gain either the money or the public excitement it deserves. We don't want to pour any cold water on their efforts, because in principle we are with them, but we think the competition could be better and when it is, we will join a European competition, or create one ourselves."

The RFU has had a representative, John Jeavons-Fellows, in on the planning of the competition, which has already had inquiries from five other European countries.

One of the tournament directors, Vernon Pugh, the Welsh Rugby Union chairman, said the European Cup – which involves clubs from France, Italy, Ireland, Wales and Romania – had virtually killed off any hopes Kerry Packer may have had of starting a rebel club competition. "Each of the other unions has guaranteed that it would not support any other competition," he said.

Pugh added: "This is a very necessary vehicle for achieving two things: firstly, more funding for clubs; secondly, better competition." Compelling reasons, and although Packer was touting a sum of £50m, there is as yet no guarantee, whereas the ITV deal is secured and, significantly, is unconditional.

Hallett also hinted that the RFU will not budge over the 120-day registration period which has been hampering, among others, Rob Andrew in his recruitment for Newcastle. Hallett explained: "The 120-day regulation is likely to remain in force for the same reason it was introduced, which was to give people time to settle down and to prevent a huge opening up of the market place before people are ready or geared up to take part in it."

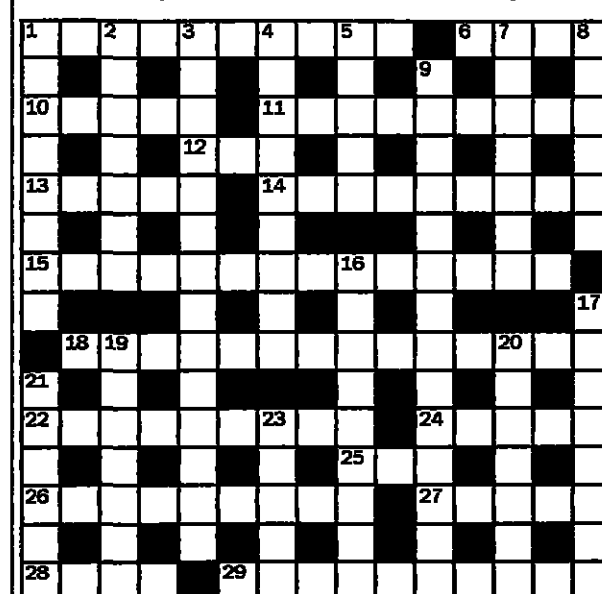
The England manager, Jack Rowell, already without Andrew and the Northampton full-back Ian Hunter (virus), for the South Africa match on 18 November at Twickenham, yesterday dropped five other players from his original party of 35 – Richard West (Gloucester), Andy Gomarsall (Wales), Tim Stimpson (West Hartlepool), Jon Sleightholme (Bath) and Rory Jenkins.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2815, Thursday 26 October

By Helleborne

Wednesday's Solution



DOWN
1. Light newspaper? (3)
2. On seeing this instrument chuckle: "Marconi's blown it!" (9)
3. The image projected by sound men? (5)
4. The motorway's bad guys? (4)
5. Coward's way out: run when there's danger around (10)
6. US town is home to one feet-footed maiden (8)
7. Rent for example's down (7)
8. Leap-frogs the circus tent, perhaps (4,4,3,3)
9. An important stage in conversion to metric? (9)
10. Dash from singer! (5)
11. One that's kind of lunar may be so described (7)
12. The victim is Mother, as some would say (6)

ACROSS
1. A car with no sound system (5)
2. Agent clumsily let CIA enter craft (9)
3. Manoeuvre a number to spot then go off (5-5,4)
4. Do some arm-twisting to make the warden act? (3,3,6,2)
5. Heavy water and unrefined plutonium, perhaps, being returned to America (9)
6. Silver parrot with beak open? (5)

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Thursday 26 October 1995

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Improvement in medical safeguards welcomed

Boxing
LIZ SEARL

British boxing yesterday announced a series of safety improvements with the aim of giving boxers greater medical protection and, in particular, reducing the number of fatal injuries suffered by boxers in British rings.

The 12-point plan (see table) was approved by the British Boxing Board of Control before the recent death of James Murray, the Scottish bantamweight. The improvements are based on the recommendations of an independent panel, made up of neurosurgeons, neurologists and neuro-radiologists, set up after the death of another British boxer, Bradley Stone 18 months ago.

The new rules bring the weight-in times forward by 24 hours, and give doctors a greater influence on whether a bout should be stopped. The referee, however, will still have the final decision on whether a boxer is fit to continue fighting.

John Morris, the board secretary, said the new weight-in rule had already been implemented three months ago when he first received the panel's report. A special medical revision committee is now considering how to implement compulsory magnetic scanning, which will let boxers who show serious abnormalities such as blocked arteries or clear fluid around the brain. A seasoned fighter whose brain

12-point plan for a safer future

1. The weigh-in for all championship bouts to be at least 24 hours before the fight. The rule will also apply to non-championship bouts, but under special dispensation the weigh-in can still take place on the day of the fight. In this instance a fighter failing to make the weight will not be given time to reduce his weight.
2. Brain scans to be compulsory for all boxers annually.
3. Scans to be MRI instead of CT. A panel of doctors to be set up in order to have consistency in interpretation of investigations.
4. Funding to be sought for research into psychometric testing.
5. Random drug-testing to be stepped up.
6. Post-contest medical checks to be tightened.
7. Suspension period for boxers knocked out or stopped extended from 28 to 45 days. No boxer stopped or knocked out to spar for 28 days.
8. Any boxer knocked unconscious or who, in the view of the doctor, has taken excessive punishment should go to hospital. Board can suspend any boxer ignoring medical advice either at the venue or at hospital.
9. Ringside medical requirements approved in general, but a special medical panel will assess further ringside resuscitation equipment.
10. Referee to be permitted to consult a ringside doctor during the contest. The doctor to be permitted to draw any matter of concern to a referee between rounds.
11. Doctors and paramedics at ringside to be clearly identifiable, and seated where they can see clearly and gain immediate access to the ring.
12. Doctors to enter the ring immediately at the end of all contests to check both boxers. The ring to be kept clear of all except specially designated people, particularly until the doctors give the all-clear.

shows worrying marks on the scan – compared to earlier scans – will be suspended. In each case an independent panel will examine the boxer's scan, and will have the power to ban a fighter for life, although he will be able to appeal.

Peter Richards, the chairman of the panel, said he hoped a worldwide reduction in the number of rounds would eventually be considered, but the board will look at this option only if a worldwide agreement is reached. Barry McGuigan, the former world champion who is now the

president of the Professional Boxers' Association, said: "This is the right way forward. There are a few points that I would like to talk to the BBBC about, but we are going in the right direction."

"There will be criticism from people who will say we haven't gone far enough," Morris said. "But in my opinion they have blinkers on. They are not looking at what will happen, and they aren't looking at the rights of the individual."

Ken Jones on the new proposals, page 30

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